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ABSTRACT

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION (76TH, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, AUGUST 11-14, 1993). PART VIII: PUBLIC RELATIONS.

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Spanning the Boundaries: Support for First Amendment Rights Among Public Relations Practitioners, Journalists and the Public

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ABSTRACT

Spanning the Boundaries: Support for First Amendment Rights Among Public Relations Practitioners, Journalists and the Public

Journalists and public relations practitioners have common interests in protecting media rights, although public support is weak. The "boundary spanning" function of public relations, however, suggests that practitioners will better understand the public's perspective than journalists. To better understand the relation of free expression values, we surveyed samples from all three groups. PRSA members were significantly more supportive of media rights than the public but less supportive than SPJ members, placing them in a position to serve as mediators.

Spanning the Boundaries: Support for First Amendment Rights Among Public Relations Practitioners, Journalists and the Public

Both journalism and public relations share a common need for First Amendment protection–journalists as reporters and commentators, public relations practitioners as advocates and mediators. Both professions, too, address the public through the mass media and have a common interest in limiting the power of government to dictate what can be said, published or broadcast.

Yet journalists, in particular, often express dismay when they learn that the American public, in poll after poll, displays little support for those free expression rights journalists consider so essential to the functioning of a democratic state.[1] As a response, the Society of Professional Journalists initiated the Project Watchdog campaign to educate the public about First Amendment rights, but that effort has been criticized from a public relations perspective for presenting the viewpoint of journalists alone, thus failing to help the public understand that free expression protections apply to all individuals in a democracy.[2] Under such circumstances, reporters and editors might seek natural allies in the effort to raise public support for First Amendment rights. Whether public relations practitioners are positioned to function as such allies, however, remains a question open for investigation.

From the beginning, journalists and public relations practitioners have shared many interests and values. Ivy Lee, one of the first "professional" public relations practitioners could "speak the language" of journalists while still representing the interests of an organization. But the profession Lee helped forge has as often found itself at odds with journalism over conflicting goals and methods, leading to the development of what Ryan and Martinson define as a "love-hate relationship."[3]

On one hand, surveys show that journalists hold the credibility of PR practitioners in low esteem[4] and have a generally negative image of the profession.[5] On the other hand, journalists and practitioners agree substantially about news values and the function of journalism, even though practitioners' perceptions of editors are more accurate than the reverse, a comparative survey has shown.[6] Given such conflicts and common interests, Charron argues, journalists and practitioners adopt a variety of roles when negotiating their relationships with each other, engaging, as the occasion demands, in avoidance, competition, accommodation, compromise or collaboration.[7]

Certainly, in some of these roles, public relations practitioners function as advocates for organizations, persuading groups that their position on an issue is correct. Thus, they are sometimes positioned as opponents of journalists, although–when their interests converge–they can also become firm allies. Many public relations professionals, however, function as ombudsmen mediating between their organizations and various publics.[8] In such a role, the practitioner and the journalist are not natural enemies. And, because practitioners often find themselves positioned between journalists attempting to cover stories and sources or a public resisting or outraged at that coverage, they might serve as natural ombudsmen between the two groups. Indeed, if the problems with Project Watchdog are more general, public relations professionals might better understand the perspective of the public than do journalists.

To learn how the free expression values of journalists and practitioners are related to those of the general public and whether public relations personnel might serve a bridging role, we surveyed members of the Public Relations Society of America and the Society of Professional Journalists concurrently with a nationwide survey of the general public conducted for the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1990.

Boundary Spanners. Many public relations professionals function at the edge of organizations, serving as what Grunig and Hunt recognize as "boundary" personnel–liaisons between organizations and external groups and individuals.[9] In this role, they often have as much contact outside the organization as they do inside. As such, practitioners belong to a larger class of personnel identified by students of organizational behavior as "boundary spanners."

Boundary spanners are employees whose positions link two or more systems with at least partially conflicting goals and expectations.[10] Boundary spanning is often performed by more than one person whose job is to disseminate information in order to minimize conflict and to coordinate the activities of key groups.[11] People in these roles experience less stress than those in mainly task-oriented jobs,[12] and they tend to be more satisfied with their jobs and more influential in defining their roles in an organization.[13] Even organizations can be described as "boundary-spanning" if they exhibit high levels of collaboration, communication and participatory decision-making.[14]

In public relations, research that measures attitudes and behaviors affecting an organization is considered a boundary-spanning activity if it deals with both internal and external publics.[15] Public relations practitioners also function often as advocates of social responsibility to various publics as they initiate boundary-spanning activities to better mesh their organization with its environment. For example, corporations with several public relations practitioners, or with several non-business board members, tend to be involved in a wider range of social responsibility activities than other corporations,[16] and organizations that employ personnel in formal boundary spanning roles adapt most readily to external changes.[17]

Support for Free Expression. Free expression advocates won only 67% of their cases before the Supreme Court in 1991-1992, according to one count,[18] and judges in states such as Texas have increasingly relied on state bills of rights to provide

protections because the Supreme Court has begun to retreat from championing individual rights.[19] Public support for free expression has, in fact, never been strong, particularly when support for the rights of unpopular or deviant groups is concerned.

The 1991 ASNE study of free expression values found weak public support for many individual rights and media rights[20] and the press release accompanying the study's release predicted that the First Amendment, particularly in regard to media rights, would be qualified beyond recognition if a ratification vote were taken today. Further, that survey revealed a fracture between support for individual free speech rights and media rights. Although about two-thirds of the mass public voiced support for unconditional protection of various forms of individual political speech in that survey, only about one-third would protect absolutely the similar right of journalists to endorse candidates during an election campaign, and support for unpopular media content (pornography, selling objectionable books, controversial reporting practices) was even lower.

Little hard empirical evidence exists to suggest that the climate for free expression has deteriorated in recent years, and a major meta-analysis that finds a liberalizing trend in political values during the last two decades bases its conclusion partly on free expression items from the General Social Survey. However, these items measure many forms of expression that have long since become accepted in American society: allowing books by atheists, communists or homosexuals to be carried in libraries or allowing representatives of those groups to speak in public.[21] Not considered in the study are shifts in a pro-control direction when speech or publications included sexist, racist, homophobic or other content not now considered "politically correct," or emotionally linked issues such as flag burning and music videos that feature drug use. Indeed, moving beyond attitudes toward specific forms of communication to a

more general measurement of the "climate" of free expression is difficult both philosophically and scientifically.

However, in a climate in which many of the most basic media rights receive marginal unconditional support from a majority of the public, advocates of free expression should naturally seek allies. And any attempt to persuade the mass public to more firmly support free expression may not only improve the climate for dissenting voices but may affect the state of Constitutional law as well. As Gaziano has shown, increased public support for free expression has correlated positively with favorable Supreme Court decisions on First Amendment rights.[22] Under such conditions, the more thoughtful evangelists for First Amendment rights might look for mediators that could help conflicting groups come to greater mutual understanding.

Granted, support for most civil rights is correlated with income and, particularly, educational level.[23] Thus, economic and political "elites," including journalists and public relations practitioners, can be expected to be more supportive of free expression rights than the mass public. Still, as Lauzen and Dozier suggest, public relations personnel are a critical link between an organization's internal and external environment.[24] In such a context, journalists and public relations practitioners may find themselves united as advocates of greater free expression rights. But public relations personnel may, as well, be positioned to serve as mediators better capable of understanding the American public tastes than do journalists.

Hypothesis

Because public relations theory posits that practitioners should function as a liaison and buffer between the media and the public, the researchers believed that members of PRSA would have greater appreciation for legal guarantees of media freedoms than the public but would also display a greater understanding of how those

freedoms can be abused and how perfectly legal forms of communication can still damage individuals and the public. Therefore the following hypothesis was adopted: Members of the Public Relations Society of America will be significantly more supportive of most media rights than the mass public but significantly less supportive than members of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Method

For the survey of the general public, 1,508 adults from all 50 of the United States were contacted by telephone. Respondents were selected by random-digit dialing, then the next-birthday method within households. Interviews were conducted April 2-23, 1990, by a professional survey research firm. The refusal rate was 30%. The sample closely approximated the general U.S. population as estimated by CACI Marketing Systems.[25] The median educational level was "some trade school," the median age was 36-39 and the median household income was $25,001-$30,000. Eighty-four percent were white and 10% black. Hispanics of any race made up 7% of the sample. Forty-nine percent were male.

Random samples from the mailing lists of the Society of Professional Journalists and the Public Relations Society of America were also surveyed by mail in spring-summer 1990. Two waves of questionnaires were sent one month apart, with a reminder postcard following the first mailing. This procedure produced 656 usable responses from SPJ (45% of valid addresses) and 811 from PRSA (54%). Because some members of SPJ continue in the organization after they have left the practice of journalism, those identifying their current job as public relations or advertising were eliminated from the sample because the objective was to compare journalists with public relations practitioners (those eliminated were, in fact, similar in attitude and orientation to the PRSA sample). This produced a final sample of 528 from SPJ.

The PRSA sample was dramatically more affluent and educated than the general public. The sample displayed a median educational level of "some graduate or professional school," a median age of 40-49 and a median household income of $50,001-$75,000. Ninety-eight percent were white and 2% black. Hispanics made up 3% of the sample, and 49% were male. Practitioners had held their current job a median of 7 years and had practiced public relations a median of 14 years.

The SPJ sample was somewhat less educated and affluent than the PRSA members. The median educational level was college graduate, the median age 40-49 and the median household income $45,001-$50,000. Ninety-eight percent were white and 2% black. Hispanics made up 3% of respondents, and 62% were male. Journalists had been employed in their current job a median of 11 years and had worked in the profession a median 15 years.

Newspaper journalists accounted for 50%, magazine journalists for 11%, TV journalists for 9% and radio journalists for 3%. Other media accounted for 15%, while 13% reported having non-media jobs (but not in advertising or public relations). The SPJ sample was somewhat more upscale and older than the results from Weaver and Wilhoit's recent survey of American journalists,[26] where the median age was 35-44 and the median income $31,000.

The Survey Instrument. Batteries of identical questions concerning media rights, other free-expression rights, expression-related behaviors and demographics were administered to survey all three populations. In particular, respondents were asked whether they thought a common list of 26 media-related rights should be protected all the time, under certain circumstances or not at all. These questions were scored on three-point scales, with the highest score going to "protected all the time."

Issues ranged from false and misleading advertising, to reporting classified information without government approval, to editorializing during campaigns, to

showing music videos that deal with sexual themes or promote drug use, to selling magazines or books featuring nude pictures. The exact wording of each question, together with the means for each item by survey group, can be found in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Analysis of variance, controlling for the effects of gender, race, age, income and education on each of the three survey populations, was used to test the primary hypothesis. These demographic categories were selected because they had proved to be significant predictors of attitudes toward free expression in the past.[27] Race was coded as black, white or other. Income was recoded into five categories (under $15,000, $15,001-$25,000, $25,001-$40,000, $40,001-$50,000 and above $50,000) from the original 11 categories, while education was recoded into three categories (less than high school graduate, high school or some trade school, and some college to postgraduate) from the original nine levels.

Results

The 26 items used to measure the degree of legal protection for media freedoms combined to form a highly reliable additive index, facilitating testing the major hypothesis. This media protectiveness index displayed a Cronbach's alpha of .91 for the general public, .87 for PRSA and .89 for SPJ, indicating that support for media rights is consistent across various a priori categories such as journalism, sexually explicit entertainment or advertising.[28]

A six-way ANOVA measuring the influence of gender, race, age, income, education and survey population on the media protectiveness index proved highly significant overall ($F = 61.72$, $df = 14/2070$, $p < .01$). Significant main effects were

found for sex (F = 72.57, df = 1/2070, p < .01), age (F = 23.50, df = 3/2020, p < .01), education (F = 11.75, df = 2/2070, p < .01) and survey population (F = 119.36, df = 2/2070, p < .01). There were no significant two-way interactions among factors, and the presence of empty cells, particularly in education and income, rendered tests for higher-level interactions futile. Multiple classification analysis revealed that the entire ANOVA model accounted for 30% of the variance in media protectiveness (R = .54), while survey population, the strongest predictor, accounted directly for 23% (unadjusted eta = .48).

Survey population thus proved to be a significant and robust direct predictor of protectiveness toward media rights even when controlling for other demographic factors. A Scheffé post hoc test (p < .01) demonstrated that the mean protectiveness toward media rights for PRSA (53.71) was significantly higher than for the general public (46.09) but significantly lower than for SPJ (59.11).

The principal hypothesis was thus accepted: Members of the Public Relations Society of America proved significantly more supportive of media rights than the general public but significantly less supportive than members of the Society of Professional Journalists.

Differences in Individual Dependent Variables. To ensure that no single variable or set of variables swayed the overall result on the media-protectiveness index, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted on each of the 26 scale items taken individually. The MANOVA proved significant for the overall model (Wilks' lambda = .56, F = 30.95, df = 52/4782, p < .01) and was followed by separate one-way ANOVAs, all of which displayed significant differences. The Scheffé multiple-range test (p < .01), however, showed that, on nine items, two of the survey groups were not significantly different. On those nine items, PRSA sided with the public three times and with SPJ

five times. On one item, PRSA was significantly less protective than either SPJ or the public.

As Table 1 indicates, both PRSA and the public proved significantly less protective than SPJ of false and misleading advertising, television projecting election winners during voting and reporting the name of a rape victim. SPJ and PRSA were, however, both significantly more protective than the public of the right to refuse advertising, of newspapers editorializing during elections, of the right of teen-agers to see R-rated movies, of keeping books in public or school libraries after objections to their content and of selling books after objections to their content.[29] Concerning advertising illegal products, PRSA was significantly less protective than either SPJ or the public.[30]

The items where public relations practitioners and journalists agreed seem more central to free expression values than the questions where the practitioners sided with the public. PRSA members, however, occupied the middle ground on other media-related issues that included not only journalistic rights but recording and entertainment rights, advertising rights and even the right to produce sexually oriented material or reveal information related to national security. Thus, differences among the three groups were rather evenly spread and not concentrated in one or another a priori category and thus do not seem to have biased the overall media-protectiveness index.

As the chart in Figure 1 indicates, agreement between PRSA and SPJ on the degree of protection assigned to individual variables is somewhat greater than agreement between PRSA and the public, though agreement in priority between all three groups is high. This finding is confirmed by Spearman correlations of each of the 26 variables, rank-ordered by the mean. The Spearman correlation between PRSA and SPJ was .95, between PRSA and the public was .88 and between SPJ and the public was .86.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Other Independent Variables. As the overall ANOVA testing the primary hypothesis indicated, the media protectiveness index for males (52.19) was significantly higher than that for females (48.17). Post hoc tests also revealed that the 50-64 age group (52.73) was significantly more protective of media rights than the other three groups, while those age 18-34 (49.80) and those age 35-49 (49.95) were significantly more protective of media rights than those over 65 (45.38). Those with a college education or higher (53.88) also scored significantly higher than high school graduates/those with some trade school (46.93) and those with some high school or less (44.46). Means of the two lower educational groups were also significantly different. These findings, in general, accord with previous studies of free expression rights, where affluent, well-educated males in the prime years before retirement prove most supportive.[31]

Discussion

The fact that public relations practitioners occupy a middle ground between journalists and the public on items not related to journalism indicates that practitioners share a heightened support for free expression rights that goes beyond information delivery and journalistic practice. Thus, practitioners display greater support than the public both for controversial journalistic practices (such as reporting on the old errors of politicians) and for other disputed forms of communication (such as keeping objectionable books in libraries and selling magazines featuring nudes).

But practitioners' opinions fall closer to those of the mass public concerning forms of communication that the majority of citizens find particularly objectionable:

reporting classified information, naming rape victims or juveniles charged with crimes, sexually explicit or drug-related entertainment and questionable advertising. Still, relative priorities among all three groups remain similar down the list–as Figure 1 and the Spearman correlations indicate–with SPJ most protective of most rights, the public the least protective and PRSA occupying the middle ground.

Given these findings, we believe that public relations practitioners could function successfully both as mediators and advocates between the journalistic establishment and the mass public where free expression rights are concerned, though the practitioners' softer support for most rights risks alienating those journalists with more absolutist views.

Of course, members of the Public Relations Society of America and the Society of Professional Journalists may not be representative, respectively, of all public relations practitioners or of all journalists. However, each organization presents itself as an advocate of standards of practice and ethics that should be the norm for the entire industry. Therefore, the membership of each society might be understood to embody what each profession should ideally stand for even if, in reality, all public relations practitioners or all journalists do not live up to those ideals. And there can be little doubt that both SPJ and PRSA share a greater need for First Amendment protection than the mass public and are more firmly committed to free expression, though the membership of both organizations falls somewhat short of the absolutism the most ardent champions of free expression would urge.

Table 1

Means for Media Rights Variables by Survey Population

(Ranked by cross-group means; homogeneous means in each row underlined.)

Question	Public (n=1,508)	PRSA (n=811)	SPJ (n=528)
Newspapers take sides in editorials during an election campaign	2.08	2.74	2.82
Refusing to run advertising for certain products	2.16	2.54	2.63
Protecting the publication or sale of a book, even if there are objections to the content	2.21	2.51	2.58
Keeping books in a school or public library, even if there are objections to the content	2.16	2.46	2.51
Journalists report about the mistakes a public figure made more than 20 years ago	1.93	2.43	2.59
High school students report controversial issues in their student newspapers without approval of school authorities	2.06	2.32	2.57
Newspapers or television stations run graphic photographs of violent events	2.00	2.33	2.57
Selling magazines or books that feature nude pictures	1.82	2.46	2.60
Journalists report stories about national security without government approval	1.74	2.24	2.58
Advertising products that are legal but harmful to the public, such as tobacco or liquor	1.90	2.27	2.43
Advertising guns for sale	1.99	2.14	2.41
Movie theaters allow teenagers to see R-rated movies	1.68	2.44	2.36
Journalists report factually inaccurate information that they believe to be true	1.89	2.14	2.44
Reporting about the sexual habits of public figures	1.78	2.10	2.34
Television shows music videos that deal with sexual themes	1.72	2.06	2.33
Television broadcasts pictures of nude or partially clothed persons	1.71	2.05	2.26
Journalists report the name of a juvenile charged with a crime	1.88	1.96	2.15
Distributing recordings that portray sexual themes, drugs or religious cults	1.54	1.96	2.23
Journalists report classified material that the government wishes to keep secret	1.70	1.80	2.14
Television stations project the winners of an election while the people are still voting	1.65	1.68	1.96

Table 1, cont.

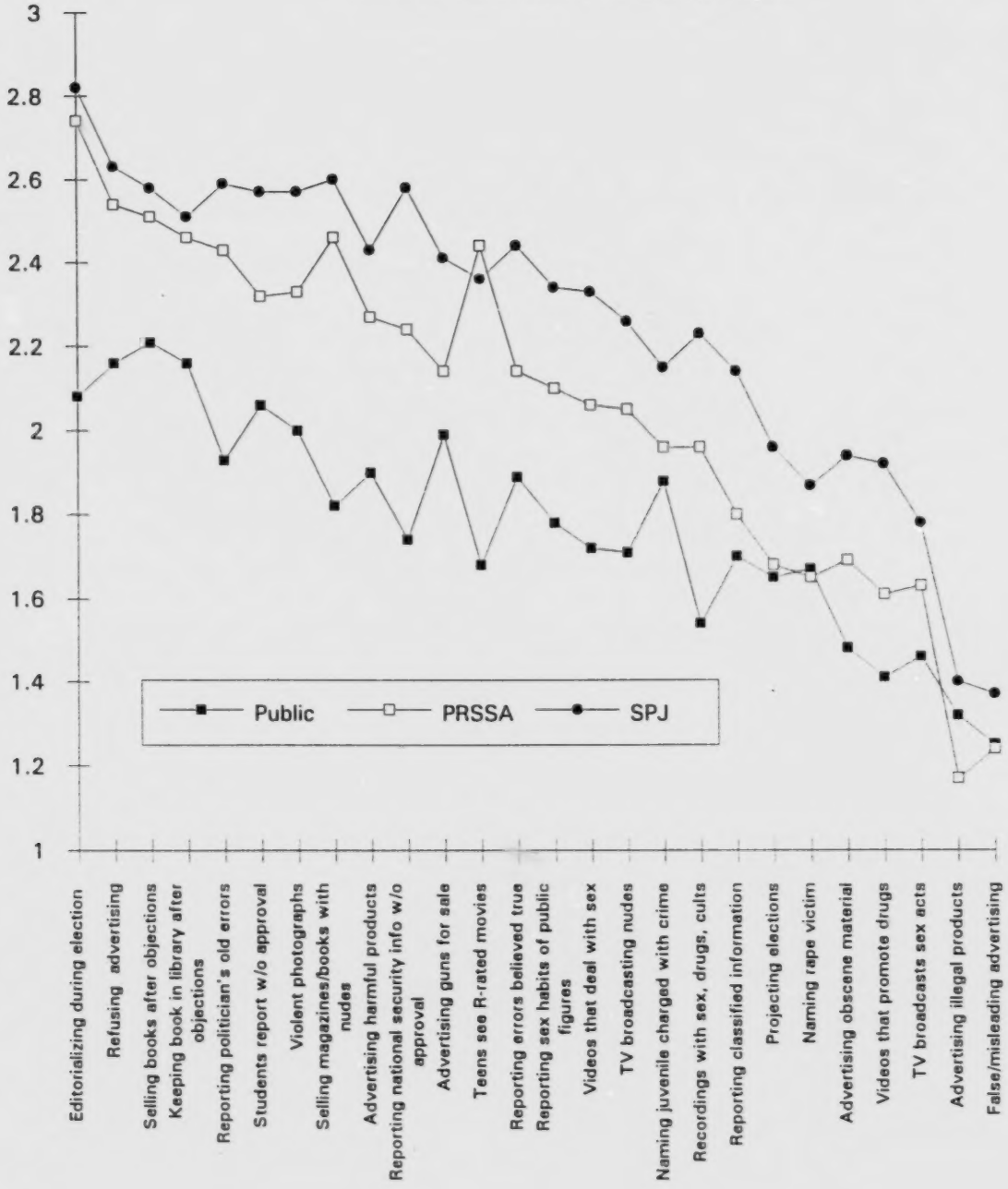
Means for Media Rights Variables by Survey Population

(Ranked by cross-group means; homogeneous means in each row underlined.)

Question	Public (n=1,508)	PRSA (n=811)	SPJ (n=528)
Journalists report the name or identity of a rape victim	1.67	1.65	1.87
Advertising pornographic or obscene material	1.48	1.69	1.94
Television shows music videos that seem to promote drug use	1.41	1.61	1.92
Television broadcasts pictures of graphic sexual acts	1.46	1.63	1.78
Advertising products that are illegal	1.32	1.17	1.40
Advertising products by making false or misleading claims	1.25	1.24	1.37

Figure 1: Support for Media Rights by Public, PRSA and SPJ

Rank-ordered by cross-group means



Footnotes

[1]See David P. Badger, "Historical Perspective," in Robert O. Wyatt, Free Expression and the American Public: A Survey Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the First Amendment (Washington, DC: American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1991).

[2]John S. Detweiler, "Public Relations and the Campaign for Press Freedom," Public Relations Quarterly, 34:19-22 (Spring 1989).

[3]Michael Ryan and David L. Martinson, "Journalists and Public Relations Practitioners: Why the Antagonism?" Journalism Quarterly, 65:131-140 (1988).

[4]Craig Aronoff, "Credibility of Public Relations for Journalists," Public Relations Review, 1:45-56 (1975).

[5]Lillian Lodge Kopenhaver, David L. Martinson and Michael Ryan, "How Public Relations Practitioners and Editors in Florida View Each Other," Journalism Quarterly, 61:860-65; 884 (1984).

[6]Kopenhaver, Martinson and Ryan, op. cit.

[7]Jean Charron, "Relations Between Journalists and Public Relations Practitioners: Cooperation, Conflict and Negotiation," Canadian Journal of Communication, 14:41-54 (1989). Charron draws the five negotiation strategies from Roy Lewicki and Joseph A. Litterer, Negotiation (Homewood, Ill.: R. D. Irwin, 1985).

[8]See, for example, E. W. Brody and Dan L. Lattimore, Public Relations Writing, (New York: Praeger, 1990), pp. 7-8.

[9]James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt, Managing Public Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984), pp. 9, 143.

[10]Henry Steadman, "Boundary Spanners: A Key Component for the Effective Interactions of the Justice and Mental Health Systems," Law and Human Behavior, 16:75-87 (1992).

[11]See, for example, Teresa M. Harrison and Mary Beth Debs, "Conceptualizing the Organizational Role of Technical Communicators: A Systems Approach," Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 2:5-21 (September 1988); Raymond A. Friedman and Joel Podolny, "Differentiation of Boundary Spanning Roles: Labor Negotiations and Implications for Role Conflict," Administrative Science Quarterly, 37:28-47 (March 1992).

[12]Joseph A. Torelli, "Sex Roles and Perceived Job Stress of Washington Elementary Principals." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, Mass., 1990.

[13]Jeanette M. Jerrell, "Boundary-Spanning Functions Served by Rural School Psychologists," Journal of School Psychology, 22:259-271 (Fall, 1984).

[14]Peter James Murphy, "School Management Tomorrow: Collaboration, Collaboration, Collaboration," School Organization, 11:65-70 (1991).

[15]David M. Dozier and Susan A. Hellweg, "A Comparative Analysis of Internal Communication and Public Relations Audits: State of the Art." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1985.

[16]Mary Ann Ferguson, Michael F. Weigold and John Gibbs, "The Relationship of Public Relations and Board-Level Boundary Spanning Roles to Corporate Social Responsibility." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Gainesville, Fla., 1984.

[17]Michael F. Middaugh, "An Empirical Evaluation of Boundary Spanning as a Conceptual Framework for Examining the Organizational Roles of Offices of Institutional Research." Paper presented at the Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Fort Worth, Tex., 1984.

[18]F. D. Hale, "Mass Media Organizations Avoid Supreme Court," Editor & Publisher, 125:60, 51 (1992).

[19]James C. Harrington, "Free Speech, Press, and Assembly Liberties Under the Texas Bill of Rights," Texas Law Review, 68:1435-1467 (June 1990).

[20]Robert O. Wyatt, Free Expression and the American Public (Washington, D.C.: American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1991), pp. 9-33.

[21]James A. Davis, "Changeable Weather in a Cooling Climate Atop the Liberal Plateau: Conversion and Replacement in Forty-Two General Social Survey Items, 1972-1989," Public Opinion Quarterly, 56:261-306 (1992).

[22]Cecilie Gaziano, "Relationship Between Public Opinion and Supreme Court Decisions: Was Mr. Dooley Right?" Communication Research, 5:131-149 (1978).

[23]See Wyatt, op. cit., pp. 63-86, for a summary; Samuel Stouffer, Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties: A Cross-section of the Nation Speaks Its Mind (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955), which surveys community elites as well as the mass public; W. Cody Wilson, "Belief in Freedom of Speech and Press," Journal of Social Issues, 31:69-91 (1975); Clyde Z. Nunn, Harry J. Crockett Jr. and J. Allen Williams Jr., Tolerance for Nonconformity (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978), p. 169; Herbert McClosky and Alida Brill, Dimensions of Tolerance: What Americans Believe About Civil Liberties (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1983), which surveys community and legal elites; Lawrence Bobo and Frederick C. Licari, "Education and Political Tolerance: Testing the Effects of Cognitive Sophistication and Target Group Affect," Public

Opinion Quarterly, 53:285-308 (1989); Karen von Elten and Tony Rimmer, "Television and Newspaper Reliance and Tolerance for Civil Liberties," Mass Comm Review, 19:27-35 (1992).

[24]Martha M. Lauzen and David M. Dozier, "The Missing Link: The Public Relations Mediator of Organizational Environments and Power Consequences for the Function," Journal of Public Relations Research, 4:205-220 (1992).

[25]For a fuller description of the sample of the general public, see Wyatt, op. cit.

[26]David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, The American Journalists in the 1990s (Arlington, VA: The Freedom Forum, 1992).

[27]See Wyatt, op. cit., pp. 63-86, and David P. Badger, "Historical Perspective" in Wyatt, op. cit., pp. 35-48, for a summary of previous findings.

[28]Though factor-analytic solutions for the 26 items are interpretable, they are not particularly intuitive or stable across groups. Further, in each case, a single strong first factor predominates, testifying to the unitary nature of support for media rights.

[29]Because some readers may not agree that the three-point scales are appropriate for interval-level inferential statistics, contingency table analysis was also run on each of the 26 variables. There, the uncertainty coefficient revealed that the public and PRSA were significantly alike only on the issue of projecting elections, while PRSA and SPJ were significantly alike on allowing teens to see R-rated movies and keeping books in libraries after objections.

[30]All such findings about individual variables must be interpreted with caution. The large number of variables and the size of the survey populations mean that some individual variables may prove significantly (or insignificantly) different by chance, even when conservative inferential tests are employed.

[31]See Wyatt, op. cit.

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Organizational Factors that Contribute to Practicing " Excellent" Public Relations

A Case Study

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A B S T R A C T

Organizational Factors that Contribute to Practicing "Excellent" Public Relations: A Case Study

The study funded by IABC to identify excellence in public relations has distinguished two-way symmetrical communication as the most effective approach. The author agrees with this assessment. However, the symmetrical model is a prescriptive theory and there is a need for descriptive theory to explain why and how this model is used in organizations. Using an account analysis, this paper looks at a specific case in which symmetrical communication was used successfully. The case study illustrates that organizational factors can either contribute to or prohibit the use of this "excellent" approach to public relations.

Acceptanced for presentation in the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication for the 1993 AEJMC Convention in Kansas City, Missouri

One of the most anxiously awaited reports has to be the final conclusions from the six-year study on excellence in public relations funded by the Research Foundation of the International Association of Business Communicators. We have been given clues as to what "excellent" public relations is, but we also want to know how specific organizations are practicing this model and how the principles and theories behind the model are applied to real world situations. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the body of knowledge on excellence in public relations. It will briefly review some of the ideas behind "excellent" public relations and then provides a case study in which the principles of this model were used. As the title suggests, this paper will focus on organizational factors that contribute to and support the use of this approach to public relations.

"EXCELLENT" PUBLIC RELATIONS

One of the most interesting and problematic aspects of public relations as a practice and a discipline is its fragmentary nature. As J. Grunig (1989) has noted, "practitioners have no common body of knowledge nor even a common set of skills" (p.8). After examining several books, journals and magazines on public relations and interviewing 83 public relations leaders, Rex F. Harlow (1976) found 472 definitions of the topic. This demonstrates the problem of defining public relations: it means something different for each person.

In an attempt to bring public relations up to certain professional standards, several definitions have been created to guide current and future practitioners in their activities. From the 472 definitions he found, Harlow (1976) produced the following working definition of public relations:

> Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound ethical communication as its principle tools (p. 3).

There are elements of this definition that public relations professionals and educators like to emphasize: first, public relations is a management function; second, it serves the public interest; and third, it should be ethical. These same elements are found in the "Official Statement on Public Relations" issued by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 1982. This proclamation stressed the management role of public relations and mentioned that public relations should counsel management "at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action and communication, taking into account their public ramifications and the organization's social or citizenship responsibilities" and that this counsel should be based on research to achieve an informed public understanding (Newsom & Scott, 1985, p. 10).

However, not all public relations is practiced as prescribed by PRSA and most text books. James Grunig knew this when, in 1976, he set into motion a theory that tried to categorize certain practices of public relations into four models. The models evolved from studies conducted to determine why some organizations practiced public relations one way rather than another. J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1990) have stated that the four models of public relations were derived from two axis; direction of communication and purpose.

> Direction describes the extent to which the model is one-way or two-way. One-way communication disseminates information; it is a monologue. Two-way communication exchanges information; it is a dialogue. Purpose describes whether the model is asymmetrical or symmetrical. Asymmetrical communication is imbalanced; it leaves the organization as is and tries to change the public. Symmetrical communication is balanced; it adjusts the *relationship* between the organization and public (p. 6).

These two axes produced four models of public relations which J. Grunig labeled as *press agentry/publicity* (a one-way asymmetrical model), *public information* (a one-way symmetrical model), *two-way asymmetrical* and *two-way symmetrical*. These four models are simplified representations of the values, goals, and behaviors held or used by organizations when they practice public relations.

J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) identified the historical development of these models and claimed that these models are still practiced by organizations today. This claim helped launch research of the models to determine if they existed in reality and, if so, why did certain organizations use one model rather than another? J. Grunig (1984) hypothesized that the public

relations model used by an organization would depend on the type of organization and the environment in which it functions. His first study of these models did not fully support the hypotheses that the organization's product/service type and its external political/regulatory environment would determine the model of public relations used and there was little support that the four models explained exclusively the public relations behavior of the organization (J. Grunig, 1984). The critical findings from this first study were that organizations practice more than one of the four models and that the predominant model used by the organization may not be the most appropriate one for the organization to adapt to its external environment.

Several studies (Fabiszak, 1985; McMillan, 1987; E. Pollack, 1984; R. Pollack, 1986) followed to determine if these models accurately defined public relations activity and if certain organizational types practiced the appropriate model as predicted by J. Grunig and Hunt (1984). All of these studies used purposive samples and quantitative survey methods to determine public relations behavior. Again, the results of these studies showed that organizations do not use one model exclusively, but use tactics from different models with one model being the dominant one. Only one of the studies substantiated the predictions made by J. Grunig and Hunt (1984): E. Pollack's (1984) study of government agencies found that the public information model was predominant as predicted. The press agentry model was the most common form of public relations found in the other studies. The two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models did not emerge as the dominant model in any of the studies, although organizations did use elements of these models (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1992).

After this research, J. Grunig and L. Grunig began to focus on the purpose of public relations as the primary distinguishing factor. J. Grunig and White (1992) identified two mindsets that dominate the public relations practice today: the symmetric and asymmetric worldviews. J. Grunig (1989) argues that this mindset or worldview influences the behavior of public relations practitioners. If a practitioner adheres to the symmetrical communication mindset, then the purpose of communication will be to benefit both the organization and the public, or to create "harmony" as Paluszek (1989) states it. However, J. Grunig (1989) proposes that the mindset that most public relations persons adhere to is an asymmetrical one:

> Such a mindset defines public relations as the use of communication to manipulate publics for the benefit of organizations. 'Persuade' is a softer word often substituted for 'manipulate,' but changing the word does not change the the mindset. Practitioners with a social conscience often convince themselves that manipulation benefits publics as well as their organizations. Again, however, the mindset remains the same (p. 30).

This type of public relations is not as effective as it might have been in the past. As Steckmest has noted, "Despite an outpouring of corporate communications, public criticism of the large corporation persists. One reason is that corporate information generally features what management wants to reveal rather than what consumers, employees, neighbors, government officials and other constituents want to know" (as reported in Ryan, 1986, p. 740). J. Grunig therefore suggests using the symmetrical model of public relations as an alternative. The symmetrical model of public relations is the more sophisticated model and is the model most likely to help an organization cope with uncertainty because it is capable of doing research to help an organization understand its environment and is prepared to help the organization adapt to that environment.

The symmetrical model as the best model for organizational effectiveness is the presupposition that has guided the six-year project on excellence in public relations funded by the Research Foundation of the International Association of Business Communicators. J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1991) argue that the symmetrical model is the most effective for helping an organization adapt to its environment and manage interdependent relationships with publics that can constrain or enhance the mission of the organization.

However, the symmetrical model is still a normative theory of how excellent public relations should be practiced. When J. Grunig (1984) first attempted to determine why organizations used one model over another, he hypothesized that it would depend on the organization's level of technology and its external environment. J. Grunig predicted that an organization would practice the appropriate type of public relations needed to help it deal with its level of technology, and its external environment, complex or static. However research on the models did not lend much support to these hypotheses. As J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1992) noted:

> Although we think that organizations should practice two-way and symmetrical communication when their environments are complex and turbulent, many—if not

> most—organizations with such environments do not practice public relations in the way our theory predicted. We have concluded, therefore, that the theoretical relationship between the models of public relations and an organization's environment and structure is more normative than positive (p. 298).

The Grunigs have concluded that organizations do not always practice the type of public relations that is best for them. To help explain organizational behavior concerning public relations J. Grunig and L. Grunig (1992) have turned to a "power-control approach" (p. 298). This approach identifies the actions and values of the dominant coalition of an organization as having more of an impact on behavior than do the rational variables of the organization's structure and environment.

The purpose of the study presented in this paper is to help build a positive theory of why organizations practice the symmetrical model and why others do not. In the literature review for the study on excellence in public relations, the IABC research team identified two concepts that seem to affect how public relations will be practiced: "organizational culture and the potential of the public relations department" (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1991, p. 274). This paper provides qualitative data to support the hypothesis that organizational factors do contribute to how public relations is practiced. In particular, it looks at the factors of organizational structure, power, culture, politics and leadership by using an account analysis of a public relations department and how it dealt with public relations problem.

A CASE STUDY: ENERGEN AND THE CAHABA RIVER SOCIETY

I chose to use a case study to illustrate how the organizational factors of culture, leadership, and power can affect the choice of public relations models. Although case studies cannot give empirical support that these factors affect all organizational behavior concerning public relations, they do give a more in-depth analysis of how an organization operates in a particular situation.

For the case study, I chose a large Southeastern utility company because J. Grunig and Hunt (1984) had predicted that utility companies would use the two-way symmetrical model and research tended to support that hypothesis (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1990). The company I selected, Energen, provides natural gas and coalbed methane to citizens in Alabama and has a good

reputation among public relations professionals. The case study was evaluated using the account analysis method: In an interview with Jim Alderman, Vice-President of Communication, I asked what kind of public relations activities Energen used, how they went about it, and most importantly *why* they used these specific activities (Tompkins and Cheney, 1983). To simplify the analysis, the case study begins with a specific incident that illustrates which public relations model the company prefers to use, and why they are able to use it.

Energen and the Cahaba River Society

"You have a problem," the legal advisor said as he walked into Jim Alderman's office. "Did you know they are going to trench your river?" He meant the Cahaba River. He called it Alderman's river because he is known as the environmentalist among the chief officers at Energen.

"What do you mean?" Alderman replied. The lawyer went on to explain that a new $50 million project of Alagasco's, the main subsidiary of Energen, required dredging the Cahaba River to provide a gas line to the other side. Alderman thanked the lawyer for the early warning and hurried over to the fellows at construction.

On the way over, Alderman thought about what the trenching would do to the river. Energen had the legal right to use a trenching machine to dredge the bottom of the river in order to lay the pipe. He knew that this technique was perfectly safe and did not jeopardize the water quality at all, but it would change the appearance of the river slightly. He also knew that a group of concerned citizens had formed the Cahaba River Society (CRS) and they had proved to be a mighty foe to anyone who designed to tamper with the river. They had already stopped one company that had a $100,000,000 investment in coalbed methane wells. This company started drilling for the methane and the CRS got a restraining order to stop them because they felt the operation endangered the river. These thoughts weighed heavily on Alderman's mind as he approached Alagasco's construction office.

"How do you plan to cross the Cahaba river," Alderman asked the project engineer. "How did you hear about that?" responded the engineer. Alderman told him that he had ears and that it was his job to know what is going on at Energen. "Well, I guess we're going to trench it," the engineer responded. Alderman asked if there was another way. "Sure," the engineer replied, "but

it's more difficult and will cost a half a million dollars, so it's not worth it."

Alderman found out from construction that the other way was technically feasible. The project engineer explained that they could back off of the river by 100 yards and use a horizontal drilling technique that would drill a tunnel 30 feet below the river in the bedrock and would not affect the appearance of the river.

Alderman went back to the legal counsel and told him what the plans were and what their options were. He also reminded the lawyer of the impact the CRS could have if they decided to cross them. "Alagasco has the legal right to trench the river," the lawyer said, "but, these issues aren't always judged on legal grounds." They both decided that the other way was the better option. To get some more support, they went to the Chief Financial Officer.

In the CFO's office they discussed their options. The CFO reminded them that this was a $50 million project and that the proposed horizontal drilling costs of $500,000 was only one percent of the entire cost. He supported Alderman's decision to use the more expensive procedure because it was good public relations and they wouldn't have any delays with legal problems and costs.

With the support of the legal counsel and the financial officer, Alderman went to the CEO to present his case. The CEO listened and agreed with Alderman's advise to use the horizontal drilling so the project would not affect the appearance of the river. With the CEO's stamp of approval, Alderman went back to construction with the new orders.

He told the project engineer about the new plans and asked when they planned to meet with the citizens of the Cahaba area. "We hadn't planned to meet with anyone," the engineer replied. Alderman then suggested that they organize a meeting with the Cahaba River Society and any other concerned citizens to discuss their plans with them. At the meeting, Alderman gave a presentation showing the CRS what Alagasco was planning to do and asked for suggestions. From what they saw, the members of CRS were satisfied with the plans and didn't have any suggestions. Alderman promised them that they would be informed of the progress of the project.

After the drilling had started, Alderman invited members of the CRS to the site. They were so impressed with the way Alagasco approached the problem of getting a pipeline across the river without altering its appearance that they took pictures to the company with the coalbed methane

wells to show how it should be done. The project was soon finished without any hassles.

ANALYSIS OF THE CASE STUDY

By using the symmetrical model, Alderman was able to avoid a possible problem and maintain good relations with a critical public. There appear to be two important factors that contribute to the reason Alderman used excellent public relations techniques and strategies: expert knowledge and organizational factors. Alderman is knowledgeable of the symmetrical model and other current public relations theory, which he attributes to his membership in statewide and national professional associations. He understands the complex and interdependent relationship between Energen and other components of its environment, and uses formal and informal research to keep informed about Energen's environment. In addition to being knowledgeable about the communication process and current public relations theory, he also is familiar with research methods, management principles, and has good connections in the media. This knowledge and expertise enables him to practice the two-way symmetrical model.

However, there are also organizational factors that contribute to whether excellent public relations is practiced. In particular, an organization's environment should demand such a sophisticated approach. The organization must also have structural support for the model, and the practitioner must have power in the organization and be a part of the political coalition in order to participate in the management function. The culture and leadership of the organization must also support the symmetrical approach.

Structure and power

As discussed previously, excellent public relations helps an organization adapt to its environment. In order for this to occur, public relations must be in a position where it can participate in the decision making process, or in the terms of General Systems Theory, it must help provide input, influence the throughput and facilitate the output of information vital to an organization's mission and purpose.

Whether public relations actually functions in this role is partially determined by an

organization's power structure. The contingency theory approach to organizational structure views organizations adapting their structures in response to certain factors such as the level of task complexity, level of task interdependence and the type of environment (Frank & Brownell, 1989). Task complexity is the level of difficulty to accomplish the basic functions of the organization. The level of task interdependence is determined by how much the different departments depend on each other to accomplish the basic task of the organization. These two variables rarely change; and if they do change it is planned and controlled internally. The same cannot be said for the organization's environment.

The environment of an organization can be either complex or simple, dynamic or static. A complex environment is made up of several different factors that could affect the success of an organization. Whether or not an environment is static or dynamic depends on how likely and dramatically it will change in a period of time.

Environments affect the structure of an organization because they introduce uncertainty. The more complex and dynamic the environment, the greater the uncertainty. Therefore, organizations must be structured in a way that can deal with its particular level of uncertainty. The key to dealing with uncertainty is the level of centralization in an organization. The greater the uncertainty, the more decentralized the organization should be. Where task complexity, task interdependence and environmental complexity and uncertainty are high, it is imperative that an organization not be too centralized.

According to Mintzberg (1980), "decentralization is the extent to which power over decision making in the organization is dispersed among members." Decentralizing the decision making process opens up communication channels and allows members of the organization who may be closest to the problem to participate. This increase in communication and participation reduces the uncertainty because it takes advantage of the expertise of various sources in the organization. Mintzberg (1980) identifies two types of decentralization: vertical and horizontal. Vertical decentralization is delegating formal decision making downward through the chain of command, so that the person closest to the situation can make the appropriate decision. Horizontal decentralization occurs when decision making power flows informally to people in operating core (people who directly produce the goods and services), technostructure (staff who design, maintain,

and adjust work flow processes and structure), and support staff (people who provide indirect support to the rest of the organization: human resources, public relations, legal counsel) (Mintzberg, 1980).

If public relations is not part of the strategic apex, then it is important for an organization to be decentralized horizontally to the point where public relations does influence the decision making process. If public relations exists outside of the centralized power, then the symmetrical model cannot be practiced.

However, it is even better if public relations is part of the dominant coalition. This position is attained through the acquisition of power. Hambrick (1981) said that coping with uncertainty is the basis for power; "Uncertainty is generally regarded as the basis for a strategic contingency" (p.253). Technology, workflow, and external environments all contribute to creating uncertainties and, therefore, strategic contingencies. Excellent public relations should be used to cope with the uncertainties created by the external environment. An organization can deal with uncertainties either proactively or reactively. Saunders (1981) listed three ways to cope with uncertainty: forecasting, forestalling uncertainty by methods that reduce uncertainty, and by taking action after an event has occurred to reduce its impact. The first two methods are proactive, whereas the last is reactive.

Only the two-way communication models can proactively reduce uncertainty. The one-way models can send out press releases and other information in order to reduce the impact of uncertainty once an action is underway, but they cannot reduce uncertainty before the action takes place. This is why most practitioners of one-way communication fill the role of a communication technician rather than a communication manager. It also explains why they are not often in the decision making process; they have nothing but speculation to contribute. The two-way asymmetrical model uses research to forecast the success of a program or communication campaign, and can forestall uncertainty by using a public relations practice called "issues management." Issues management is a proactive effort to scan the environment and identify possible sensitive issues that could confront the organization in order to begin a campaign that persuades the public to see the issue from the organization's point of view. The two-way symmetrical model uses research to forecast possible problems in order to help the organization

adapt to the problem. It can reduce uncertainty by communicating with the organization's publics and determining possible problems. It then uses dialogue with the publics to determine the appropriate action.

Saunders (1981) suggests that there are other variables, other than reducing uncertainty, which determine departmental power. She suggests that a department needs to be nonsubstitutable, pervasive, and must perform a critical task. Nonsubstitutability is defined as the difficulty with which the activities of a department can be performed by an alternate department. The harder it is to substitute the more power there is. Pervasiveness is a determinant of power that is used to denote the number of information or workflow links among departments. In other words, the number of connections. Task criticalness is the speed and security with which the activities of a department affect the primary activities of the organization. Task criticalness is the most important of these variables, according to Saunders. "In order for a department to have power it must be able to cope with uncertainty, be nonsubstitutable and pervasive. However, if a department has these capabilities but does not perform critical tasks, it cannot accrue power" (p.438). A department that performs a critical task can increase its power by increasing its ability to cope with uncertainty, its pervasiveness, and its nonsubstitutability.

But what determines task criticalness? It can be hypothesized that organizations that are innovative and concerned about the state of the external environment will give more power to public relations departments that use two-way communication models, because they help cope with uncertainty. Therefore, their task is critical to the goal of providing new products or services and finding new markets because they provide feedback about opinions or trends. The symmetrical model of public relations should also have power in organizations that value social responsibility, because they will see public relations as performing the critical task of maintaining dialogue with its publics.

The Energen Case

In the Energen case, the utility company's external environment is very dynamic. Technology for the energy industry is constantly changing and with these changes come changes of public opinion. Public relations is used to reduce the uncertainty of this dynamic environment.

Alderman said it is the communication department's responsibility to be a bell weather for the corporation. They are not just the mouth piece of the organization but the ears as well. They listen by doing research and initiating two-way communication with their publics.

Surveys on customer opinion of Energen and its services are done on a monthly basis. Energen also subscribes to more extensive surveys done by the American Gas Association, which looks at national trends and opinions. Focus groups are periodically put together to study public concerns about current issues facing the energy industry. They also track other energy companies--their competition-- so they know not only their own strengths and weaknesses but those of their competition as well.

Just because Energen is using two-way communication it does not mean that they are automatically using symmetrical communication. Other environmental factors must exist to influence an organization to use symmetrical communication, such as external pressure from either governmental regulations or other pressure groups (J. Grunig and Hunt, 1984). If this pressure doesn't exist then an organization isn't going to feel compelled to establish dialogue with publics.

Energen is partially regulated by the state government because it is a utility company. The rate of return of 13.15% to 13.65% is regulated by the Alabama Public Service Commission. Energen also deals with various pressure groups like the Cahaba River Society, concerning environmental and conservation issues. The customers of Alagasco also put pressure on the company to use symmetrical communication because they expect Alagasco to use its money wisely and be good a corporate citizen because they have a stake in its future. The customers know that if Alagasco makes bad investments then their rates will go up. So, overall, the environmental factors exist to influence Energen to use symmetrical communication. It appears that Energen understands that it is interdependent on other systems and that it needs to move into an equilibrium with those systems in order to function at its best.

The structure of Energen is decentralized vertically and horizontally to help Energen deal with this dynamic environment. Alderman said that there is no real chain of command. The flow of communication is both upward and downward. This is best exemplified by the decision making process. At Energen, they try to push the decision making process as far down as possible, what they call echelon-up decision making and what Mintzberg (1980) calls vertical decentralization. If

someone is capable of making a decision then it is a waste of time for a supervisor to make the decision for him. Their philosophy about decision making is "that the more responsibility you give an individual, the greater commitment to the success of that decision."

The organization is also horizontally decentralized. The flow of communication within the organization and among departments is horizontal, which allowed the legal department to contact the communication department, and then both of these departments to contact the financial department, without having to go through formal chains of command. The fact that the head of the communications department is a vice president is also an important structural factor. Rather than having to go through superiors, Alderman can go straight to the CEO and discuss issues and present his opinion.

The communication department is also very decentralized and works closely with other departments within the corporation. The organizational chart of the communication department is horizontal, and ideas come from anywhere, including the clerical staff. Members of the communication department act as account executives with other departments. The person in charge of investor relations works with the financial department, another person is assigned to the legal department, etc. These people are given autonomy to work with these departments and put together programs that they think will work, without having to get permission from Alderman. However, they do meet often and discuss what they are doing. All of these factors help facilitate the use of symmetrical communication. The presuppositions that people are equals, that they function better when they are given autonomy, and that management should be decentralized and should coordinate rather than dictate all appear to be present in Energen.

This case study also demonstrates that Alderman possesses power in the company. Although he has legitimate authority with his position as a vice president, he also demonstrated that he had real power as well. Because he practices a more sophisticated public relations model than just the one-way models, he has power of expertise and cannot be easily substituted with another department.

When Alderman presented the problem with the Cahaba River drilling site to the CEO, he used his expert and information power and was a valuable instrument in diverting a possible problem. By keeping on top of sensitive issues that might affect the organization, Alderman was

able to reduce uncertainty concerning the drilling project and possibly saved Energen a lot of money and legal strife. Because the organization values social responsibility and the symmetrical model, public relations is a critical task at Energen. Task criticalness is the speed and security with which the activities of a department affect the primary activities of the organization, and the Cahaba case illustrates the fact that the public relations department can influence the organization's activities when it involves social responsibility.

The pervasiveness of the communication department has been discussed in the structural analysis of Energen. The members of the department are linked to all of the other departments in order to help them with their communication tasks. Nothing happens in the organization without the communication department knowing about it because it is so pervasive. This gives the department even more power.

J. Grunig strongly emphasizes the importance of the public relations practitioner in the dominant coalition of an organization in order to practice symmetrical communication. If the public relations director is not in the dominant coalition, then he/she cannot influence policy and action that affect the organization's publics, and therefore cannot act as an advocate for those publics. It is apparent that Alderman is part of the dominant coalition. His connections with other important people in the organization give him referent power, which he uses to keep tabs on the activities of the organization and to support his views concerning appropriate action.

How did Alderman get into the dominant coalition? First of all, he asked for it. Alderman has been at the vice president level for the last ten years. Before that he was at the director level, but still had a good deal of power. When he was hired, he said he would only work for Energen as long as he could do certain things his way, such as using two-way communication, being honest, being an advocate for the publics, and for the right to go into the CEO's office and speak his mind. These requests were granted to him on his first day on the job. Without this kind of power, without being part of the dominant coalition, Alderman would have been a communication tool and not a communication manager, and the number of public relations activity alternatives would have been limited by those above him rather than having the freedom to choose the right alternative.

If all organizations actually adapted to their environmental needs, then they would have ideal power structures to ensure successful fulfillment of their missions and purpose. However, organizations are not always the rational organisms theorists would like them to be, and when uncertainty rises some organizations become more centralized so that upper management feels that it has more control over the increased uncertainty. An organization's political activity, culture, and leadership are factors that often explain why organizations act irrationally.

Politics, Culture and Leadership

Although it is the normative theory that organizations operate in accordance to the demands of their environment and allocate resources accordingly, Pfeffer and Salancik (1974) found that political coalitions have a big effect on organizational strategy. While political behavior exists in all organizations, big and small, two thing appear to contribute to an increased political activity: lack of resources and inconsistent organizational values and norms.

Power does not have to be political (Gandz & Murray, 1980). While it is true that organizational coalitions often fight over budgets, offices, and materials, what makes use of power political or nonpolitical is the means that are used or the reasons why it is used. When power is used within the sanctioned policies and procedures, this is authority. "Nonpolitical uses of power are those that involve sanctioned means for sanctioned ends, and political uses involve unsanctioned means, or sanctioned means for unsanctioned ends" (Cavanagh et al, 1981, p. 363). When official procedures are used to reach decisions that are in the best interest of the organization as a whole, even if there are disagreements, then the action is not political, nor detrimental, because technological, economic and social factors become a part of the decision making. But, when covert methods are used to affect decision making, then actions become political, and possibly detrimental because the purpose is to serve the needs and self-interests of specific groups or individuals rather than the organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1974; March, 1962).

Because an organization operates on limited resources, and because some policies or strategies inevitably benefit one group more than another, strategy formulation often becomes a political process rather than a rational one (Narayanan & Fahey, 1982, p. 25). In order to advance a mutual goal, political coalitions are formed. The members of these coalitions work together to

influence decisions that might affect their position or power in the organization.

If public relations has legitimate power and there is little significant political behavior in the organization, it can practice the excellent model of public relations. However, if there are strong political coalitions, and public relations finds itself outside of these alliances, then it will be difficult to acquire the resources needed to practice this more expensive and sophisticated model. It will also be more difficult to influence policies and procedures if the coalition is against you.

Weak or inconsistent cultures also breed political activity. To Cooke and Rousseau (1988), culture is a set of cognitions shared by members of a social unit. They add that "these cognitions are acquired through social learning and socialization processes exposing individuals to a variety of culture-bearing elements" (p. 247). Arogyaswamy and Byles (1987) define it as "the set of implicit, shared and transmittable understandings regarding the *values* and the *ideologies*, at a point in time, of any organization" (p. 648). They adopt Beyer's (1981) definitions of values and ideologies: *Values* are "a rationalized normative system of preferences for certain courses of action or certain outcomes," and *Ideologies* are "relatively coherent sets of beliefs that bind some people together and that explain their worlds in terms of cause-effect relationships." From these definitions, one might summarize by saying culture is a set of values, ideologies, and cognitions that are shared and understood through social interaction and which determine appropriate behavior. The important aspect of this definition of culture is that the values and cognitions are shared and are not uniquely those of one person.

Organizations without shared values and goals are considered to have weak organizational cultures. Weak cultures contribute to ambiguity and uncertainty because there is no consensus concerning expected behavior. Because the values and norms of the organization are not clear to all members, political coalitions position their agenda by lobbying support from members who are not sure of appropriate behavior or the organizational goals and direction.

As stated before, an organization's culture "actively shapes the company's management style and employees' day-to-day behaviors" (Waters and Bird, 1987, p. 54). The importance of culture in organizational behavior was demonstrated in an exercise by Plant and Ryan (1988) where managers found that "unless they are conscious of the assumptions they are making, the direction of their business may well be influenced more by internal values than the requirements of

the business environment."

For this same reason, strong cultures are not necessarily beneficial to the symmetrical model. If the organization's culture only values profits, closed communication, authority, and efficiency, then a public relations manager attempting to practice the symmetrical model will become frustrated because these values are not conducive to social responsibility. This is especially true with organizations that have a strong culture built on years of traditional behavior, corporate myths, and strong symbols.

But when certain values are present in an organization, Robin and Reidenbach (1987) suggest that organizational culture is the key to social responsibility. An organizational culture that promotes openness, honesty, innovation, dialogue, and social responsibility would be ideal for an organization that wants and needs to practice the symmetrical model of public relations. However, there must be a conscious effort to establish these values, because "in the absence of an overt, coherent, consistent, and integrated set of ethical core values, the organization will develop its own" (Robin & Reidenbach, 1987, p. 49). When profits and efficiency dominate the culture without the balancing effects of core values concerning social responsibility, then the strategic planning for public relations is directed principally, if not solely, by asymmetrical communication presuppositions.

This is why leadership is so important in an organization. Culture filters from the top down. Leaders establish the organization's culture with their vision. Successful leaders can establish a strong culture by applying their traits and style to communicate their vision to other members of the organization and by inspiring them to follow that vision. If the vision takes into account the need to be socially responsible, then the symmetrical public relations practitioner will fit into that vision and culture. If the vision is more concerned with making profits at any cost without a sense of social responsibility, then it will be difficult and frustrating for a capable practitioner to practice the symmetrical model.

Good leaders give meaning to an organization by broadcasting ideas across divisional boundaries and layers of hierarchy (Bennis, 1987, p. 14). Under real leadership, individuals know what they are expected to do and what the group, department, and company is trying to accomplish (Chang, 1990, 16). This is done by effectively communicating the values and vision

of the organization. The leader's vision must be articulated and reinforced constantly (Myers, 1990, p. 78).

To promote values of social responsibility, a leader must communicate effectively, set an example, and act quickly and decisively when crises arise. Successful leadership depends far more on the followers' perception of the leaders abilities than the leader's own perception. Followers expect a leader to follow his own vision and so leadership sets the standard for performance and behavior which are enforced by expectations (Garton, 1989, p. 27). Therefore, leadership requires action in developing and promoting those who are in support of social responsibility values and correcting or removing those who are not (C. Kelly, 1987, p. 16). In order to do this, a leader has to actively participate "in developing behavioral norms both by example and by discussion of values" (C. Kelly, 1987, p. 15).

But do leaders actually have an effect on other members of the organization? Research suggests that they do. A research study on small groups found strong evidence of the effects of a leader on moral reasoning (Dukerich et al, 1990). The research was divided in 2 studies. In the first study, discussions of 21 four-member groups were tape recorded, coded, and analyzed to identify the factors that affected group performance. The data indicated that a group's moral reasoning level increased when a person with principled reasoning took the leadership role. In the second study, Dukerich et al, attempted to manipulate the leadership variable by assigning the task leadership role to individuals who reasoned at higher principled levels. The results indicated that the reasoning level of the assigned leader affected group performance, while individual performance overall on a subsequent moral reasoning task benefited from the group experience.

If leaders can have an effect on raising the values and moral decisions of others, they are also capable of *lowering* the levels of ethics and social responsibility in an organization. It is optimistic that a leader will increase the level of the ethical climate, however, research shows that most managers and CEO's are not spending a great deal of energy on social responsibility. The manager's on-the-job values drive them to act in ways that solely promote the company's best interests. Most managers take a pragmatic, results oriented approach to problems, rather than ask themselves, "Is it ethical?" (Frederick, 1988, p. 49). A large scale survey by Schmidt and Posner found that most managers focus their "professional energies on organizational effectiveness,

leadership, organizational growth, and organizational stability," rather than the organization's value to the community and its service to the public (as reported in Frederick, 1988, p. 49). A study of over 200 corporate managers by Frederick and Weber found that "three-quarters of the managers show a preference for *person*-centered values rather than *society*-centered values; and an even larger percentage give a higher score to *competence* values than to *moral* values" (Frederick, 1988, p. 47). A manager or an employee with a sense of personal morality or social responsibility will be discouraged to express these values in making business decisions in such situations because the company's corporate culture dictates otherwise (Frederick, 1988, p. 47).

The Energen Case

In order for Alderman to practice the symmetrical model he had to be involved in the decision-making process; be a part of the dominant coalition. Alderman earned the right to be a part of this coalition. As studies on organizational politics have shown, it is not enough to have legitimate power, you must be able to work with other powerful forces to accomplish your tasks. As Alderman proved that the symmetrical model was the best public relations approach for Energen, he gained the confidence of the CEO and other powerful members. He was able to reduce uncertainty in many situations, and was rewarded with the necessary resources to continue practicing the symmetrical method. If there happens to be a reduction in the available resources to all departments, then the political activity within Energen could increase and Alderman will probably be forced to use his sources of power to assure his part of those resources. But at the moment, Alderman is relieved of the stress of having to battle against opposing political coalitions and he has the power to practice the symmetrical model with the support and approval of the power and political structure of the organization.

The fact that the organization's culture supports Alderman's efforts also eliminates political maneuvering against his style of public relations. The "official culture" of Energen encourages members to act in a way that promotes social responsibility. The "official culture" is the culture that is most immediately visible; made up of mission statements, credos, and codes of ethics (Schein, 1989, p.4). Schein (1989) also notes that the official culture is not always the same as the "operating culture," which is the culture that is truly manifested in the behavior of the members of

the organization, regardless of the cultural image management may try to create with the use of codes, credos, symbols, etc. What usually has a larger impact on the "operating culture" is how behavior is rewarded.

In the case of symmetrical public relations, values should exist that support the idea that the organization must know its environment and be willing to adapt to external forces. In the Cahaba River incident these values were displayed by Alderman, the legal advisor, the chief financial officer, and the CEO. These members compose part of the leadership at Energen, and their values reflect the vision of Rex J. Lysinger, CEO of Energen Corporation, that the company should provide quality service and products and be a good neighbor in the Alabama community. Lysinger also understands the importance of culture and has said that "culture is management's value system and way of conducting business."

As has been stated before, the culture filters down from the top down. Because these leaders value social responsibility, they expect other members of the organization to have the same values. On the back of all of the employees identification cards is a statement of principles. The statement reads: "We will conduct our business and earn a profit based on ethical standards and values which recognize: the dignity and worth of all individuals; commitment to excellence in performance; personal and business integrity; and, courage of convictions and actions." Alderman assured me that this card is more than just a showpiece; you can get fired from Energen by not following this statement. Alderman reiterated the idea of speaking out; "You will never be fired [from Energen] for challenging an idea or something I have told you to do, but you will be fired for coming in an saying, 'I could have told you in advance that that wouldn't work.'" This value obviously encourages the members to act in a way they feel is morally responsible.

The one member of the story that did not seem to completely buy into this official culture was the project engineer. However, after the example shown by Alderman and the support of the CEO to spend more money on the project to avoid problems with the Cahaba River Society, this project engineer probably no longer doubts the sincerity of these values stressed by the leadership. Rewarding ethical and socially responsible action is an important part of shaping the culture of an organization, and if the leadership fails to support their vision with the necessary resources then these values will fall by the wayside.

The culture stressed by Energen's leadership promotes social responsibility and values dialogue between the organization and its publics. As Alderman puts it, "Inside the organization, I am expected to be the spokesperson of the publics and to represent their opinions on policies and actions. Outside the organization, I am expected to be the spokesperson of the organization." Because Energen has accepted Alderman's role in the organization to serve as a channel for negotiations when conflicts arise, he did not encounter any major obstacles in practicing symmetrical public relations in this case. This case study shows that when a capable practitioner chooses to practice the symmetrical model of public relations and is supported in that goal by leadership, the organization's culture, and with political support from other departments, this approach can benefit the organization and truly is an "excellent" form of public relations.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As publics become increasingly wary of big business, organizations must become more socially responsible or possibly face private litigation and governmental restrictions. Public relations is situated at precisely the point between the organization and the public where it can act as a mediator. However, if the purpose of public relations is to convince the public that the organization is always right, then there is little mediation and little trust from the public. The symmetrical model of public relations is the model most equipped to help an organization be socially responsible. It is especially useful for organizations with complex and dynamic environments, because it recognizes the value of dialogue with publics to understand these environments, and can help the organization adapt to the changing times. In order to practice this model, the practitioner must have a knowledge of research methods, communication and social science theories, have appropriate management skills, and the courage to represent the concerns of the public as well as those of the organization.

However, even with these skills and knowledge, other factors can serve as barriers from using this model. The organization's structure, culture, leadership, power structure, and political coalitions must support this model in order for the practitioner to implement this model. When they do not support the symmetrical model, then the practitioner pursuing this model will encounter

difficulty and frustration, and may choose to practice another model more in line with the organization's values and goals.

The case study showed that an organization with a decentralized structure, a public relations department that is provided with legitimate power because it is valued for its ability to reduce uncertainty, a cohesive culture with strong social values, and visible leadership with a vision of social responsibility can practice the symmetrical model of public relations without problems as long as there is no political opposition from other powerful coalitions. In the Cahaba River incident, the model worked because it was socially responsible and it probably saved the organization some money and legal hassles.

It is hard to tell the entire relationship between the factors of structure, culture, leadership, power, and politics from just one case study. Further research must be done using both qualitative and quantitative methods. In particular, cases should be studied where the symmetrical model should be used and could be used due to the level of expertise of the practitioner, but where it is not being used because organizational factors restrict it. Quantitative research should also be done to determine the extent of this problem. Are there many public relations practitioners who are frustrated in their jobs because they have learned the "excellent" model of public relations and yet are not allowed to use it when it is necessary? Or do organizations hire and retain practitioners whose values are congruent with those of the organization, thereby eliminating this conflict? Only further research will determine the answers.

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Toward a Feminist Theory of Public Relations

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Toward a Feminist Theory of Public Relations

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Public Relations Division

ABSTRACT

This study developed a feminist theory of public relations by explaining discrimination against female practitioners and positing an agenda for change. Thirty-seven "long" interviews and three focus groups conducted with female practitioners revealed that major obstacles for women are marginalization of public relations, problems stemming from male dominance at work, women's "balancing" act between career and family, and gender stereotypes. Solutions for overcoming barriers were proposed for society, organizations, public relations, and women.

SIGNIFICANCE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The feminization of public relations has received attention recently in scholarly literature and the trade press. Many scholars have documented gender-based inequities in salary and status among practitioners (Beasley & Theus, 1988; Broom, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Childers, 1986; Dozier, Chapo & Sullivan, 1983; Scrimger, 1985; 1989; Theus, 1985; Turk, 1986). Few research efforts, though, have attempted to systematically explain what factors cause discrimination against women in public relations (Wright, L. Grunig, Springston, & Toth, 1991).

Other discussions have described the "problems," such as lowered salaries and status, associated with women's becoming the majority in the field (Adler, 1991; Bates, 1983; Bernstein, 1986; "Could be woman's field," 1982; Lesley, 1988; Nadler, 1986; "PR people deplore encroachment by marketers and 'feminization,'" 1984; Thaler, 1986). Still others have stressed various remedies for women who face discrimination (Anderson, 1975; Ford, 1986; Mathews, 1988; Post, 1987; Rappaport, 1986; Stewart, 1988). These solutions typically suggest individual techniques for women striving to advance to managerial roles.

However, some communication scholars have questioned many of these proposed tactics (Dervin, 1987; Foss & Foss, 1983; Rakow, 1986, 1987, 1989; Spitzack & Carter, 1987; Toth, 1989b). They believe that strategies geared toward fixing women's purported deficiencies are faulty because they fail to address the underlying problem--society's devaluation of women and women's work. That is, calls for women's changing themselves to assimilate more effectively into the current (male) power structure in organizations are limited because these strategies do nothing to change the systems that cause gender discrimination. This position has been supported by research showing that even when women rise to managerial ranks in public relations, they still may face gender inequities (Dozier, Chapo, & Sullivan, 1983).

What is needed to counter this devaluation is a transformative perspective for understanding and combatting discrimination against women in public relations. As Creedon (1989a, 1990) explained, the condition of female practitioners could be improved by revisioning the value of women's work in public relations. But, for her, this elevation would not occur by merely changing women's position within the existing system, but by structural changes in the system itself.

Feminist Theory and Public Relations

Creedon's charge suggests the appropriateness of feminist theory as a conceptual framework for exploring gender issues in public relations (L. Grunig, 1988, 1990a; L. Grunig & Toth, 1991; Rakow, 1989; Toth, 1988, 1989b, 1990). However, little feminist theory has been developed within public relations. And, as Rakow (1987) argued, most of the scholarship under the more general rubric of "gender research in communication" is unhelpful to women because, by investigating gender issues in

way that assumes women are deficient, this research merely "shores by the established patriarchal order" (p. 79).

The theory developed here, then, will be a feminist theory of public relations. Women are posited as effective communicators and managers in their own right (Rakow, 1987). And, women are treated as individuals whose "perceptions, meanings, and experiences are appropriate and important data for analysis" (Foss & Foss, 1988, p. 9).

Contributions to Students and Practitioners

Given this perspective, this scholarship should resonate with female students' and practitioners' diverse experiences and underscore the value of those experiences. Male students and practitioners also benefit from looking beyond women's presumed shortcomings to examining the structural barriers women face. Without this effort to refocus, the depreciation of public relations for all practitioners may proceed to the extent that feminization continues.

Contributions to the Body of Knowledge in Public Relations

Consciousness-raising. The goal of this feminist analysis provides a unique contribution to public relations scholarship. As Foss and Foss (1988) pointed out, the dominant methodological paradigm within social science seeks to predict and control human behavior (see also Currie & Kazi, 1987, p. 96).

Feminist scholarship, however, implies a different goal. Within the feminist paradigm, researchers seek to "understand human behavior and through that understanding, to change social life" (Foss & Foss, 1988, p. 10). Thus, the feminist scholarship conducted here offers the practical, activist goal of raising consciousness about gender issues germane to public relations.

Hearing women's voices. Developing feminist theory within public relations also helps fill gaps in public relations' current doctrine by bringing together the voices of those who, for the most part, remain unheard. That is, most of what is known about women in public relations has been gleaned from government data, the opinions of experts in the field, or the results of programs of research that were not designed, at least in the beginning, to investigate gender issues. A good example of the latter is Broom and Dozier's work on public relations roles, which brought gender issues to light although this was not the primary goal of their research. Few research endeavors within public relations have attempted to document the experiences of female communicators from their points of view. Doing so through feminist research, however, helps solve both basic and applied problems.

Solving basic problems--phallocentrism and exclusivity. Anderson (1988) contended that when scholars describe the world by examining women's experiences, the knowledge that is created does not merely add to established constructs of social scientific thought (the "add women and stir" position). This is because the experiences of women have "been invisible. . .to men as the dominant class" (p. 356).

Rakow (1987) echoed Anderson's point by arguing that scholars' doing research from a male perspective generally have not been able to "see" women and their experiences (p. 81). These researchers have assumed, however, that what they were studying is universal, when, in fact, what they were studying was male.

The solution to avoiding this problem within public relations theory lies in Anderson's (1988) suggestion that any social scientific account of reality must "make sense of both women's and men's experiences, and, therefore, must be constructed from the vantage point of each" (p. 356). Feminist scholarship, thus, transforms established constructs in public relations into a body of knowledge that is inclusive and gender sensitive.

Solving applied problems--moving beyond patriarchy to valuing the feminine. At the applied level, female students and practitioners benefit from a body of knowledge that gives priority to their experiences. These women are better served by scholars and educators who do not conceptualize their research and curricula from a patriarchal point of view that omits women's experiences and devalues the feminine.

A swing to the feminine in public relations may also affect profoundly the communication practices of organizations and the implications of public relations for society. Some scholars have suggested that a definition of public relations as cooperative, two-way communication tends to be a feminine conceptualization while combative, unbalanced communication is rooted in masculinism (see Kanter, 1977; Kramarae, Schultz, & O'Barr, 1984).

Contributions to Methodology

Avoiding exploitation and imposition. Looking beyond the transformations that feminist scholarship might make in public relations' body of knowledge, the qualitative methodology underlying the feminist approach taken here is an original contribution to the field in and of itself. Since women speak for themselves in their own voices, some of the criticisms leveled against traditional methodologies are avoided. Among these criticisms are the exploitation of research subjects and the imposition of the researcher's reality upon subjects' experiences (Fine, 1988).

Incorporating subject participation and collaboration. The methodology employed here also adds a participatory, collaborative component to the research process that is lacking in conventional methodologies. This component is needed in public relations research to move beyond the "researcher-subject distance and detachment" (Steeves, 1988, p. 12) characteristic of surveys and experiments that have resulted in women's experiences being absent or distorted.

Toward a Feminist Theory of Public Relations

A suitable unit of analysis for a feminist theory of public relations was suggested by the work of feminist scholars Bernard (1981), Harding (1986), and Johnson (1985). These researchers found that substantial divergences exist between what males and females experience and how they define

those experiences. Given this, an appropriate focus for this study is female practitioners' explanations for discrimination in public relations.

The indeterminacy inherent in a focus as broad as women's explanations for discrimination might seem uncomfortable to researchers who are more accustomed to the explicitness of hypothesis testing. However, an explicit focus for the theory developed here is premature. What is needed is an exploration of female-centered perceptions that brings as "few presumptions and preconceived structure" as possible to the study (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1987, p. 84).

This broad focus does, however, provide a foundation for preliminary theory construction. Locke et al. (1987) pointed out that this inductive approach, whereby data are collected to develop theory rather than test pre-established hypotheses, is an entirely appropriate avenue to theory building. This path is especially fitting here since it results in detailed catalogs of participants' own words, which then are used as data from which theory begins to be created.

This route also is particularly compatible with a feminist definition of theory. Eschewing empiricists' preoccupation with identifying variables and testing relationships, feminist theorists generally concern themselves with explaining discrimination against women and outlining a social agenda for change (see, for example, Gordon, 1979; MacKinnon, 1989; Self, 1988). Thus, the feminist theory presented here will do the same. Women's "voices" will provide the explanations and prescriptions that lead toward a feminist theory of public relations.

This exploratory study, therefore, has two purposes. The first purpose is examining female practitioners' explanations for discrimination in public relations and their proposed solutions for vanquishing gender-based inequities.

The insights provided by this exploration can then be used for the explicit purpose of formulating recommendations that speak to transforming public relations, organizations, and, ultimately, society so that public relations and the women who practice it are esteemed.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Feminist Theory and Gender Research in Public Relations

An appraisal of research about women in public relations reveals that the liberal feminist perspective inherent in much of this scholarship provides an important, but incomplete, framework for understanding gender issues. Radical feminist researchers such as Rakow (1989) have challenged the liberalist position that female students and practitioners need to change so they may integrate more effectively into the existing system. Instead, Rakow posited that the system of male-centered values that define worth in organizations and public relations classrooms should change (see also Hon, L. Grunig, & Dozier, 1992; L. Grunig & Toth, 1991; Steeves, 1987; Toth, 1989a, 1989b).

Tong (1989) pointed out, however, that no feminist perspective is the answer to the "woman question(s)" (p. 1). Instead, each approach provides "a unique perspective with its own methodological

strengths and weaknesses" (p. 1; see also Condit, 1988). Wright, L. Grunig, Springston, and Toth (1991) made the same argument. As they contended, the strongest plan for effecting equity for female practitioners may be incremental--"compatible with liberal feminism with the radical intent of changing society so that the male system no longer defines the organizations in which public relations practitioners operate" (p. 35). The benefits of this combined approach should be kept in mind while exploring how feminist perspectives can inform research about women in public relations.

The Velvet Ghetto revisited. The International Association of Business Communicators' "Velvet Ghetto" study (Cline, Masel-Walters, Toth, Turk, Smith, & Johnson, 1986) is an appropriate starting point. In the 1989 follow-up investigation, "Beyond the Velvet Ghetto," Toth (1989a) pointed out that the prescriptions given in the initial study took a liberal stance by assuming that achieving equity is up to individual women. For example, the authors of the Velvet Ghetto advised women to become aware of typical salaries for men and women in communications so that women could improve their salary negotiating abilities. Further, they suggested that IABC chapters develop mentoring programs so that women could gain management experience. Women also were encouraged to seek out role models.

Toth went on to suggest that even though this liberal stance is only one avenue toward women's liberation, most public relations scholars have not yet explored others. Toth explained that a radical feminist position would move beyond liberalism's focus on what women need to do to how society must change--such as developing a national day care policy and shifting social beliefs that women should fulfill the majority of domestic duties.

Like the Velvet Ghetto project, the Fall 1988 issue of Public Relations Review addressed obstacles women in public relations face and strategies for women's overcoming them. But, again, radical feminists would question the liberal position of some authors who suggested that the solution to whatever problems women encounter lies exclusively in women's learning to play the game like men and garnering the dividends many men currently enjoy.

Breaking the glass ceiling. In PR Review, Dozier (1988b) provided an example of this perspective by arguing that female practitioners break through the glass ceiling by assuming male power tools. One of these tools is scanning research--social scientific methods practitioners use "to find out 'what's going on' among internal and external publics" (p. 6).

Dozier went on to suggest that scanning research is important for all practitioners because it gives them control over a scarce resource (information) that is useful to the dominant coalition of an organization. By controlling this resource, practitioners' power is elevated. That is, armed with this valuable information, practitioners are more likely to be included in management decision making.

Dozier contended, however, that the use of scientific scanning is more important for females than males. Since the stereotypical manager possesses stereotypical masculine characteristics, male practitioners are more readily accepted by the predominately male top brass. In addition, male

practitioners are "groomed for the manager role through mentoring" and by male managers' taking them under their wing as "informal assistants" (p. 12). Because of these advantages, male practitioners do not need the power accrued via scientific scanning as much as female practitioners do. Dozier's solution for females is, thus, do more scanning.

The liberalism underlying Dozier's logic is apparent: Female practitioners' subjugation is a result of sexist socialization that leaves them with stereotypical female characteristics. Since these "stereotypes. . .are inconsistent with attributes of good managers," the feminine stereotype works "in concert with other factors" to block women's ascension in organizational hierarchies (p. 6). Dozier's answer for female practitioners is to realign themselves with the masculine stereotype (power and control) through scanning research. By doing so, they will be more likely to "fit in" and be invited to participate in the deliberations of the powerful.

Toth (1988), however, cited several studies that may cast doubt on the viability of Dozier's proposition. In the first of these, Ghiloni (1984) studied women in the public affairs department of a corporation and found that, although women were playing an increasingly important role in maintaining corporate power, they were not likely to gain individual power as a result. Ghiloni explained that this was because the women were stereotyped in a way that kept them second-class citizens despite their involvement in corporate power wagers.

Ghiloni's description of how corporate women were granted many privileges but still dominated was paralleled in the work of Messner. Messner (1987) found that organizational communication practices dominate and demean women.

Power versus empowerment. A crucial issue here rests on the difference between the masculine notion of power and its feminine alternative, empowerment. Knappenberger (quoted in Swoboda, 1990) explained the distinction well:

> There is a big difference between the kind of involvement that draws employees into the debate but does not involve them in the actual decision making and empowerment, which gives them both the tools and the right to make the decision [emphasis added]. (p. H3)

Knappenberger went on to point out, however, that the empowerment of employees usually is not done with the blessing of management. He explained that when managers are used to "barking out the orders," sharing decision making is difficult to impossible (p. H3).

Given this resistance, radical feminists have criticized the logic underlying suggestions like Dozier's. They reject the idea that more effort on the part of women will elevate women as long as "power" is championed by top management. Instead, they call for new forms of organizations where a concern with power has been replaced by the presupposition that empowerment is congruent with good management. Unlike power, which usually operates as a zero-sum game (the more power one has, the less others have), empowerment involves building up one's own strength by building up others

(Helgesen, 1990).

Blaming the victim. Like Dozier, others have proposed how women need to change while failing to indict organizations and society. Along these lines, Stewart's (1988) piece too often steers toward "blaming the victim."

Stewart did bemoan society's directive that parenting is women's work. But, she charged that if "mothers are willing to make their careers secondary to their husband's careers," then organizations are justified in not considering women equally for advancement (p. 22). However, she neglected to point out that women do not always have the luxury of making their career primary since men typically are paid better than women (see, for example, Kuhn, 1992). Furthermore, most men do not share equally with their female partners in performing domestic responsibilities (even when these women work full-time outside the home) (Hochschild, 1989). Thus, either the logic of finances or familial duties (or both) do not allow some women to pursue their careers with the single-mindedness that many men enjoy.

Stewart (1988) went on to note the lack of professionalism of women in organizations who spend company time on tasks unrelated to their work. The example she gives is planning colleagues' birthday parties. She might have pointed out, though, that employees' spending company time chatting about things unrelated to work is not unique to women. The real problem for women wanting to create a professional image is that men define what is appropriate behavior in organizations (Morgan, 1986). And, as long as the standard continues to be defined by men, many women will always come up short no matter what they do or avoid doing. Therefore, Stewart's recommendation that women need only to toughen themselves up for the business world is limited.

Along these lines, Blum and Smith (1988) contended that this liberal perspective, with its tendency to blame the female victim, would seemingly be unpopular. Instead, however, they maintained that this position has been quite prevalent.

On this point, Blum and Smith cited Hennig and Jardim's (1977) renowned book, The Managerial Woman, as the archetype of this approach. In The Managerial Woman, Hennig and Jardim explained gender inequality in the workplace by focusing solely on individual personality traits. But, Blum and Smith (1988) questioned whether what seems to be a problem within the structure of the corporation is under the individual's control.

A feminine alternative to management. Might a more insightful (although tougher to implement) recommendation than disparaging feminine personality traits involve transforming organizational value systems so that feminine characteristics are regarded as legitimate? In support of this position, Shapiro (1990) argued the time has finally come for a new agenda: "Women, after all, are not a big problem. Our society does not suffer from burdensome amounts of empathy and altruism, or a plague of nurturance. The problem is men--or more accurately, maleness" (p. 62).

Interestingly, much of the recent literature on organizational management echoes Shapiro's sentiment. Many scholars (Foy, 1980; Naisbett, 1982, 1985; Ouchi, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982) have offered suggestions that involve organizations' adopting and appreciating feminine values, which are posited not only as more humane, but also as more responsive to the changing internal and external environments of the 1990s that organizations have to operate in (Levine, 1990; Mann, 1986; "Women managers superior," 1988).

More myopic solutions. Mathews' (1988) discussion provided still more insufficient solutions for overcoming gender discrimination in public relations. That is, her cataloguing of what women need to do to "progress in management and leadership" also neglected to address the conditions and systems that are oppressive to women (p. 25).

Criticisms of Mathews' stance and suggestions for a more radical perspective are inherent in some of the questions posed by an undergraduate class in public relations at the University of Maryland that read Mathews' piece. Commenting on Mathews' prescriptions, one student (quoted in L. Grunig, 1990b) challenged Mathews' assertion that "women in public relations 'lack focus' about their personal and professional lives" and need to overcome their timidity toward career pathing (p. 30).

As this student asserted, any lack of focus stems from women's being "victims of their traditional roles in society" (pp. 31-32). Going a step further, however, this student (pp. 31-32) argued that men need to "play a role in helping women lessen the price women must pay to attain their professional goals" (pp. 31-32).

Another student questioned Mathews' (1988) suggestion that "women must make a choice between having a good career in public relations and having a good family life" (p. 30). Challenging this trade-off, this student said: "We always read that women must choose between career and children. Do men ever have to make these decisions?" (quoted in L. Grunig, 1990b, p. 30).

Perhaps most poignantly, another student pointed out the psychological cost to women that goes with some of liberalism's prescriptions:

> Mathews suggested that women should look at their worth and not just their salary. Do you think that when a woman realizes she is worthwhile she will feel any better about not earning as much as her colleague who is a man? (p. 28)

Related research: Advice for aspiring female practitioners. Rappaport's (1986) list of "tips" for female practitioners who are trying to move into senior management is another nearsighted strategy because she exclusively placed the burden of responsibility on individual women.

Echoing Rappaport's advice, Graham (quoted in Lukovitz, 1989), president of Fleishman-Hillard, Inc., commented, "I'm sure discrimination goes on, but, in general, I'd advise any young woman to go into public relations, because the only real barriers are one's own abilities" (p. 20).

Blum and Smith (1988) pointed out that perspectives like Rappaport's and Graham's are abundant in the popular literature. These viewpoints emphasize tactics for "women to 'make it to the top,' to 'have it all,' to be assertive, to dress for success--all, of course, on an individual basis (Blum & Smith, p. 531).

Anderson (1975) provided still another example of exclusively liberalist counsel for female practitioners. She maintained that "often a woman's biggest handicap is that her bosses do not think she is responsible" (p. 25). Thus, for Anderson women merely need to prove that they are capable: "Grab opportunities, come to work early, stay late, compete, play the business game, and do good work" (p. 25). And, of course, "Do not make the coffee unless men in your office share the task equally" (p. 25).

Radical feminism argues that this "be all you can be" approach encumbers women while men (those most likely to be the boss) are absolved of all responsibility for ensuring equitable treatment of employees. Why should a woman have to do more than a man in a similar position to prove she is responsible?

Anderson might have pointed out that the problem does not lie with women, but, rather, with the stereotypes that employers harbor. Of course, the possibility that negative stereotypes about women will disappear in short order may be remote. Nevertheless, this long-term strategy is still more promising than Anderson's approach.

This is because, as Conrad (1985) pointed out, even when women counter negative stereotypes by adopting behaviors like those suggested by Anderson, their successes may be attributed to external factors (i.e., luck or an uncharacteristic spurt of ingenuity) rather than to individual competence. Thus, the negative stereotype and its consequences (less pay and status) may stick regardless of women's providing evidence to the contrary.

Unfortunately, Conrad regressed in his argument by suggesting that women must counter this problem by providing "more evidence and more consistent evidence [emphasis in original] of their competence" than men (p. 308). Radical feminists would challenge this position by asserting that no amount of evidence--no matter how consistent--would be enough as long as attitudes about women's inferiority remain unchanged.

Perhaps recognizing this, Conrad (1990) more recently acknowledged that the strategies presupposing women's accommodating patriarchal organizational cultures may not be the most productive avenue for effecting equity. Two alternatives that he suggested were women's adopting "innovator" and "radical" roles (p. 334).

Unlike the accommodating "custodian," the innovator acts in novel ways that eventually may modify organizational culture. The radical wholly rejects organizational culture and seeks fundamental transformations.

Conrad's custodian perspective is similar to the mindset of female communication executives profiled in Communication World. These women argued (quoted in Post, 1987) that "there's plenty of room at the top" if female practitioners create their own opportunities (p. 8). One suggested that women should take "on as much work" as they "can possibly handle" (p. 8). Another urged women to constantly keep their "finger in the wind" of their industry (p. 8).

Toth (1988), however, took issue with these women. As she asserted, the outlook of these communicators "belies the reality that although women are rising in the executive public relations ranks, three-quarters are still in the lower echelons" (p. 42).

Toth (1988) went on to disparage these female executives' tendency to subscribe to the "myth...of the endlessly expandable woman who can do it all...the superwoman" (p. 42). To make her argument, Toth cited two polls that cast doubt on these female communicators' suggestion that women's rise to the top can be smooth provided they just "get busier." The first, a survey of California executives, found that reaching the top involved more personal sacrifices for women than for men (Freeman, 1986; see also Brown, 1979). Similarly, a poll of women executives in Texas revealed that women who strive for the high ranks face trade-offs, obstacles, and conflicts (Hersh-Cochran, Griffin, & Mensch, 1986).

Women and self-image. Ford's (1986) analysis rounds out this critique of gender research in public relations. She, too, focused heavily on the ways in which aspiring female practitioners should improve themselves.

For example, Ford recommended that "women must guard against sex role stereotypes" (p. 25). Ford's solution for women involves their substituting "a broader self-image for the limited self-image of the average woman" (p. 26). That is, women need to get beyond thinking of themselves as "helpers" of one person or department (a conceptualization that Ford argued naturally fits into the public relations technician support role) to seeing themselves as "helping to fill an unlimited need for the product or services of their (sic) company" (p. 26). Only after women make this substitution, Ford maintained, will they be lifted to upper management.

The need is clear for women who aspire to management to conceptualize their role in broader terms than that of a helper. Ford's suggestion, however, seems useless as long as those with control over promotion continue to define women as stereotypical "assistants" who lack the "management" personality.

Along these lines, Ryan (quoted in Lukovitz, 1989), refuted assertions such as Ford's: "Contending that women aspire to be technicians is horrendously akin to blaming the victim. All the women I know perceive themselves as far transcending the roles they are obliged to occupy" (p. 20).

Similarly, Bogart (quoted in Lukovitz, 1989) made the same point: "I don't agree at all that there aren't as many women as men aspiring to the highest positions. Some men, as well as women,

aspire 'only' to being technicians for all kinds of reasons" (p. 20).

Supporting this position, DeRosa and Wilcox (1987) documented that among their sample of students in five California schools, women and men were entering public relations for the same reasons. Moreover, both female and male students were equally interested in managerial roles.

Another rebuttal of Ford's thesis is found in Kanter's (1977) work, Men and Women of the Corporation. Rejecting individual personality explanations like Ford's, Kanter argued that the structure of one's job explains differential achievement and outcomes and, therefore, women's inferior status in the workforce. Discussing Kanter's position, Blum and Smith (1988) explained that "traits that are often cited as causes of women's subordinate status are better understood as results of subordinate positions in organizations" (p. 533).

Research Questions

Research questions arise around issues that are not adequately confronted or resolved in the existing literature. Notably absent are female practitioners' answers to the following: What factors explain discrimination against women in public relations?

Also needed is a more efficacious register of solutions for overcoming gender discrimination in public relations. Here, the fundamental question is the following: Which liberal/radical feminist strategies can effect equity for women in public relations?

METHODOLOGY

These research questions lead to a discussion of methodology. However, feminist scholarship does not imply a distinctive method; feminist research is distinguished by how methods are used. Harding (1987) suggested one use involves feminist researchers' listening carefully to what female informants think about their lives.

Long Interviews with Female Practitioners

Harding's proposal implies that a listening technique like the long interview, a qualitative data-gathering scheme outlined by McCracken (1988), is a cogent method for this study.
Long interviews are similar to in-depth interviews except that long interviews go beyond studying individual perceptions and feelings; identifying shared mental categories among participants is the primary goal. This goal meshes well with exploring women's (both individually and as a group) perceptions about discrimination in public relations.

The long interview's emphasis on participant-centered testimony also is important. That is, long interviews provide an opportunity for women to speak for themselves. As McCracken pointed out, the most important principle to keep in mind when conducting qualitative interviews involves "the recognition that the first objective. . .is to allow respondents to tell their story in their own terms" (p. 34).

Given this consideration, a schedule of general question areas was developed instead of a

structured questionnaire. However, as the study proceeded, this schedule was relied upon less and less. Participants discussed the research questions deeply and pointedly with little prompting.

The inherent flexibility of this scheme worked well because interviewees were able to spontaneously discuss experiences and issues. This unanticipated testimony contributed important insights. Respondents' having plenty of room to talk empowered them and enriched the data.

No methodology, however, is without faults. The disadvantages of interviewing have been outlined well by Marshall and Rossman (1988). The first is misinterpretation due to cultural differences and observer effects (the presence of the interviewer warps the reality she or he is studying). Distortions were avoided here by collaborating with selected participants while writing up the findings. This exchange helped ensure that if erroneous interpretations and distortions occurred, they were brought to light and corrected before final conclusions were set forth.

Another limitation is the researcher's dependence upon the cooperation and honesty of a small group of key informants. Securing cooperation, however, was not a problem. Every single woman who was contacted agreed to be interviewed.

As for honesty, the feminist paradigm rejects empiricism's search for objective "truths." Research participants' views of their world, however subjective, are valid. Thus, the rigor of this study's findings lies in the extent to which research participants' experiences and perceptions are presented fairly and accurately.

One last limitation is dependence on the abilities of the interviewer to be resourceful and systematic as well as to control bias (Marshall & Rossman, 1988). This study's resources stemmed from the researcher's and participants' experiences with the research topic. Systemization was provided by having an orderly (but not rigid) scheme for data collection and analysis. And, last, confronting bias is a distinguishing feature of feminist research. That is, the researcher's biases were declared up-front and throughout the interviews. In addition, interviewees were encouraged to voice their subjectivities.

Choosing Respondents

McCracken's (1988) plan suggests that when choosing respondents, "less is more" (p. 17). As he pointed out, working longer and more carefully with a smaller number of people yields richer data than working superficially with many people.

Studying a small number of people raises the red flag of the quantitatively trained scientist. But, as McCracken explained, the quantitative investigator most likely is striving for generalizability--determining how many and what kind of people share a certain characteristic. In this scenario, an adequate sample size is crucial.

In the qualitative case, however, the researcher is most interested in depth. Deep probing allows the investigator to discover the analytical categories and assumptions according to which

respondents construe their world.

Peacock (1986) used a visual analogy to explain the intense scrutiny characteristic of the qualitative perspective: Here, the researcher seeks bright light and depth of field; the brighter the light, the smaller the aperture of the lens; and the smaller the aperture, the larger the depth of field.

This distinction is especially important for studying women in public relations. Plenty of studies already have examined impressive "samples" of practitioners (e.g., PR Reporter's and PRJ's annual surveys). But, despite their breadth, these studies have revealed little useful knowledge for effectively confronting the issues surrounding gender discrimination.

Keeping this in mind, the selection of 34 female interviewees obviously was not dictated by sampling rules. Nor were limiting criteria used. Any woman who seemed to be a bona fide public relations practitioner (as opposed to telemarketers, salespeople, or receptionists, for example, who claim to do "public relations") with enough experience (at least five years) to shed light on the research questions was considered a credible choice.

One principle, however, was kept in mind--diversity. Although this group is not representative of any larger collective, as diverse of a group as possible (with regard to age, type of organization, organizational level, and so on) was convened. But, even so, this group is somewhat narrow; these women are middle class and mostly Caucasian and American. However, included were one American-Asian (she prefers this order), one African-American, and one Briton. So, although these women's experiences speak powerfully about gender discrimination in public relations, their stories are just part of a larger picture.

Interviewees range in age from mid-20s to over 60. None is an entry-level practitioner (no doubt a function of picking women with at least five years experience). Their positions range from mid-level to top; most are high-ranking (directors and above).

The organizations for which these women work or worked are diverse. Included are corporations, government, public relations agencies, associations, and non-profits. All of the women have at least a bachelor's degree, and 12 have a master's degree. Most studied public relations or an allied field (e.g., English). Most of the interviewees were located through personal and professional contacts in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and, later, in Gainesville, Fla., and throughout Central Florida. Others were suggested by several of the interviewees.

The Long Interview: Procedure

Pre-test. To pinpoint places where the interviewing scheme might be faulty, a pre-test was conducted. At the University of Maryland, three female students with some public relations experience were interviewed.

Each of these sessions was taped. Doing so gauged the timing and progression of the interview and allowed for any necessary modifications before meeting with participants.

Interviews. Once the pre-test was completed, 37 interviews were conducted (several women were interviewed more than once). All of the interviews were taped so respondents' exact words could be retrieved, and all were conducted in person except for seven. At the request of one interviewee, a telephone interview was conducted. The remaining six telephone interviews were completed with contacts in places to which traveling was not possible.

The face-to-face interviews took place at different times (during and after work, lunch, and the week-end) and at different places (their offices, restaurants/cafes, and a library). All of the interviews lasted from one to three hours. The average was about 90 minutes.

Data Analysis

A clear-cut formula for analyzing the results of qualitative interviews is not available. However, feminists' concern with showcasing women's stories suggests that these women's "voices" in paraphrases and direct quotations provide the "data" for this phase of the research design.

With this is mind, notes and tapes from the interviews were reviewed. Responses were transcribed either verbatim (when the response demanded direct quotation) or in summary form. Next, themes were identified, comments were arranged under these categories, and differing opinions were documented.

Focus Groups

At this point, three focus groups were convened with women (those who could be clustered geographically) chosen from the group of interviewees. These focus groups were held in College Park, Md. (with four women), Gainesville, Fla. (with four women), and Melbourne, Fla. (with five women).

The advantage of these focus groups was their complementing the interview data. More effectively than the one-on-one interviews, these sessions probed collective issues and themes. Contributions like these led Bowker (1991) to recommend that scholars who interview women individually use group techniques as well.

However, the disadvantages of focus group methodology also should be kept in mind. Broom and Dozier (1990) and Pavlik (1987) have explained that findings from focus groups cannot be generalized to any larger population; the domination of some members may reduce the emergence of issues; group dynamics may result in "group think" more than individual ideas and beliefs; and, the subjective biases of the researcher may lead to analyzing the data according to personal prejudices.

Feminist scholars, though, stress "using whatever method and perspective is needed" to permit women's experiences to be heard (Dervin, 1987, p. 109). Thus, as Wright et al. (1991) have noted, feminists would give high value to focus group methodology if this technique provides an opportunity for women to have voice (see also L.Grunig, 1990c; Toth & Cline, 1989; Toth & L. Grunig, 1991).

Methods and Procedures

Discussing the same general questions posited in the interviews, focus group participants spoke

for approximately one and one-half hours at each session. All of the focus groups were audiotaped and videotaped.

Next, analysis of the focus groups' commentaries was integrated into a preliminary synthesis with interview findings. To encourage collaboration, this synthesis then was sent to six of the participants, who reviewed the findings and confirmed that their sentiments were expressed fairly and accurately (after several minor corrections).

Focus Group Characteristics

All of the focus group participants belonged to at least one professional association in public relations; several had held positions as high as president. These women's tenure in public relations ranged from six years to over 20. As undergraduates, four of the women had majored in journalism; six majored in public relations; one majored in technical communications; one majored in English; and, one majored in sociology. The participants' ages ranged from mid-20s to over 50. Eight of the participants were managers whose positions ranged from mid-level to high-ranking. Three women owned their own business, and one woman worked for one of the business owners. One woman was a re-entry doctoral student who previously had held a managerial post in a national association.

FINDINGS

This section addresses the research questions. Keep in mind, however, that this portion reflects participants' perceptions only. Whether respondents' beliefs are supported by other research literature or by the researcher is of no consequence here; these women's experiences are valuable in their own right.[1]

Research Question 1: What factors explain discrimination against women in public relations?

Marginalization of the Public Relations Function

Research participants mentioned several problems specific to public relations. The most pervasive obstacle was the marginalization of the public relations function. Because their colleagues often do not understand the importance and purpose of public relations, practitioners are assumed to be organizational lightweights--the "party planners."

As a vice president of marketing and public relations for a non-profit health care organization pointed out, the glass ceiling may be related to the image problem for public relations. Her solution was to "become savvy in marketing." That is, since "public relations does not have irrefutable evidence" of its effects on the bottom line, her link to marketing, a function that can show direct effects, elevates her credibility.

A media relations director for a private, technical university stated that sometimes it is harder

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[1] Some women are quoted more than others either because they participated in more than one interview or were a focus group member (or both).

for her "to overcome the perception of being a public relations person than being a woman." As she argued, public relations people--men and women--are "perceived as stupid."

A manager of public relations for a manufacturer of shuttle booster rockets faces similar misconceptions about public relations. For her, the "second hardest part" of her job is "fighting the attitudes against public relations" (the first is fighting the attitudes against women). She argued that the "very white, Anglo-Saxon, military, Southern, chauvinist" managers of her organization "don't even know they are not operating in the real world." As she explained, she still hears things such as, "Give it to the PR girl."

A related problem is that public relations' job responsibilities do not provide the operational (or even management) experience needed for top posts. Several research participants believed that the glass ceiling was a result of the "staff" status (as opposed to "line" status) of public relations.

A director of community relations for a county school system described her situation in this way. She explained that as a member of the superintendent's staff, she is a director whereas all of the male staff members (she is the only female staff member) are assistant superintendents. Although she does report directly to the superintendent, she argued that her inferior status, relative to the men, is linked to her job.

This issue surfaced in all of the focus groups.[2] The women at College Park pointed out that public relations rarely feeds to the head of organizations. And, they noted that public relations often is placed under other functions such as development. They also wondered if feminization would exacerbate this trend. As one participant contended, discriminatory attitudes toward women as senior managers might keep public relations in the middle of organizational hierarchies.

In the same group, another woman explained how her organization was restructured "to make public relations less than senior management." That is, her department now reports to human resources, which in turn reports to the chief financial officer. When she asked the CFO why, his response was, "There are no women directors and we're not sure whether upper management will accept you."

On this point, some of the members of the focus group at Melbourne drew an explicit link between the marginalization of public relations and feminization. One contended that feminization and the devaluation of public relations go hand in hand. As she stated, "Women's work and their products are not valued as much."

Several research participants argued that the marginal status of public relations explains why so many women are in the field. That is, women are attracted to public relations because it is an "acceptable" role for them in the corporate stream; the function is not seen as a "strong" position.

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[2] To limit redundancy, focus group participants are not referred to by title.

In the focus group at College Park, one woman made a related comment. She contended that because of gender stereotypes, men have an easier time accepting women's proficiency at communications than they do with other positions (operational functions).

Raising another issue, several research participants worried that feminization might hinder the development of public relations as a management function because of encroachment, or public relations' sublimation to a related department. A vice president/group manager of a national agency noted that encroachment by lawyers is already a problem in public affairs and issues management.

However, not all research participants acknowledged the marginalization of public relations or its link to feminization. Several women argued that public relations' credibility is improving as the measurement of results becomes more precise.

The women in the focus group at College Park generally were optimistic about public relations' stature. They asserted that, far from being marginalized, public relations is outstripping traditional advertising and marketing because the same results can be achieved through public relations at a lower cost. To bolster their argument, they cited several agency mergers and in-house blendings.

Faulty College Curriculum

Underlying the marginalization of public relations was the flawed or inadequate college curriculum in public relations. Many research participants bemoaned the state of education in public relations, linking deficiencies in the college classroom to the degradation of the public relations function. Their major criticism was the curriculum's emphasizing technical skills at the expense of rigorous business courses. On this point, several women admitted that their business skills are not adequate for further advancement or that they have had to return to school to fill in gaps.

In the focus group at College Park, one participant argued that students often choose a public relations major because they are hoping to avoid the quantitative side of business. But, all of the women in this group asserted that men in public relations are just as likely to dodge "numbers" as women.

Along similar lines, several research participants asserted that the public relations curriculum does not train for senior management. They believed that practitioners often lack skills in salary negotiation, critical thinking, and strategic management.

In the focus group at Gainesville, one participant echoed this concern, arguing that business schools "crank out" managers, but journalism schools do not. And, she stated that the latest trend within journalism programs is an emphasis on academic research--not enhancing business acumen.

Graduates who cannot write was another complaint among women in the focus groups at College Park and Melbourne. In the group at College Park, one participant worried that if practitioners' communication skills are lacking, their ability to sell their ideas to management will suffer.

Male-Dominated Work Environment

Addressing problems beyond public relations, many research participants mentioned the stifling effect of male dominance in the workplace, which contributes to host of problems for women. Most basic is that at work, "maleness" is valued more. Thus, women's concerns often are not legitimized.

Bringing up this issue, a director of communications for a state solar energy center remarked that she wanted to establish a communications program geared toward children (a concern she linked to being a woman), but her idea was squashed. The masculinism of the organization dictates that she spend her time communicating to those with "money and power."

A Ph.D. student in journalism explained this dilemma in terms of role socialization. As she stated, "The values that are important--conflict, confrontation, power, dominance, macho strength--have been socialized into men." She argued that women's traditional concerns--such as educating children--are devalued.

On a similar note, some participants contended that women's contributions are not always acknowledged. Several women mentioned how their male bosses have taken credit for their work. In the focus group at Gainesville, participants raised the same issue. One woman noted that at meetings, her ideas often go unheard. But, when a man later suggests the same thing, he is applauded.

However, several women argued that male dominance varies by type of organization. In the focus group at College Park, a director of corporate communications for a technical and professional services firm linked her organization's male dominance to industry.

So did a manager of public relations for a manufacturer of shuttle booster rockets. As she explained, most of the men are retired military and very close knit. "It's a good old boy network," she said. "They are just being recycled again and again. My boss has had four jobs."

A senior counselor for a national agency argued that the glass ceiling is felt more in traditional, for-profit institutions. That is, an agency such as hers is more progressive.

Still other women characterized their organizations as progressive for women. For example, a media relations director at a private, technical university stated that a "university is more open-minded; they (people in academe) are more free thinking; it (women's segregation) might be worse in a corporate environment. . .I haven't really had a problem."

Along similar lines, a retired vice president/group manager for a national agency cited regional differences in "tolerance for women." As she stated, "There will always be male dominance in certain parts of the country" (e.g., the rust belt).

Some of the women in the focus group at Melbourne noted that organizational size also makes a difference. One participant said that her male clients in smaller companies have no problem accepting a woman into their fold. She went on to posit that larger companies may be more

conservative. As another woman noted, the more red tape in an organization, the less risk men can take. Still another woman contended that most small companies are new and do not have the "entrenched [male] culture."

However, in the focus group at College Park, some participants discounted the contention that male dominance varies by type of organization or locale. These women asserted that all organizations tend to be male dominated.

Women's Exclusion from Men's Networks

Almost all research participants noted that male dominance causes women's isolation from the inner circle where important business gets done. Most referred to this clique as the "good old boy" network. And, they asserted that women's exclusion occurs in both formal circles such as the management table and informal interaction at the basketball court or golf course.

A county director of external affairs for a telephone company was particularly demonstrative--in both the interview and the focus group at Melbourne--about discussing women's exclusion because so much of her job entails building relationships in the community. But, being a woman, she does not get asked to do a lot of informal things with men. Thus, she has to work harder than a man would to "earn" her way into the male circuit. She does this by joining groups that place her within the "leadership pool" of the community. She also gains access and visibility by performing extra volunteer and community work. Further, she must do all of these in a way that is "not threatening" to the men's wives.

An associate director of research for a national agency explained that she misses input into the "off the cuff" discussions that occur, for example, on the basketball court. She argued that this informal interaction, or "buddying up" among men, puts other men "top of mind" when it comes to recommending people for jobs and promotions.

The focus group at College Park also addressed the benefits men enjoy by having non-working access to other men. And, as one participant noted, women's trying to break into this network is "damned if you do; damned if you don't." That is, women's trying to be "one of the guys doesn't play well." On this point, she recalled how surprised and uncooperative her male colleagues were when she invited herself to play golf with them. And, when she won, they stopped speaking to her.

Along similar lines, an owner of a local agency explained how her firm has missed some accounts because she is excluded from the good old boy network. And, in the focus group at Melbourne, she lamented losing "the ones [accounts] you never even know about. . .the opportunities you never get. . .[because] you didn't even make it to the table."

Most research participants implied that women's exclusion is not a male conspiracy. Rather, men are just more comfortable dealing with other men. Many women acknowledged that, similarly, women tend to be more comfortable working with women.

Not all of the participants, however, cited exclusion from men's networks. For example, a director of publications for a college of a state university contended that even though she works in a male-dominated environment, she feels that she is part of the team; the men involve her in decision making and other management functions. And, she pointed out that this inclusion is especially notable because she only works part time.

Women's exclusion brings up the issue of the similarity preference, or people's tendency to hire, groom, and promote people like themselves (Conrad, 1990). Because of this tendency, male managers tend to groom other men, not women.

An owner of a publications design business argued that men generally feel male students are better prepared for management slots. However, she did recognize some men's efforts toward fostering women's careers but could not characterize these actions as "revolutionary change."

The similarity preference is particularly vexing for women aspiring to top posts where subjective aspects such as who you know may be more important than objective criteria. As an associate director of research for a national agency stated, when promotion time comes around, "men think of him (a male protege) when they wouldn't think of a woman with comparable skills."

Women's segregation affects still another problem--women's having to turn their backs on other women. A director of community relations for an international airport argued that male privilege ensures that the "windows" of opportunity for women may be so limited that some women are forced to promote themselves at the expense of other women. Some women asserted that this dilemma results in "catfighting" among women or the elevation of only the "meanest" women. The convergence of these two problems was referred to several times as the "Queen Bee Syndrome."

Along these lines, a manager of public relations for a manufacturer of shuttle booster rockets asserted that women are "set up" to be competitive by organizational environments that limit women's potential. This, combined with women's "intense need to succeed," causes women to be "cutthroat."

A director of development for a school of journalism at a state university stated that she has worked for some difficult female bosses. She attributed these women's hardness to their constantly having to fight stereotypes. And, she believed that some women became nearly obsessive about succeeding and "being included in the boardroom."

Not all of these women, though, believed that successful women are harsh or that women undermine other women. Or, as some women asserted, neither gender has a monopoly on caddishness.

The women in the focus group at College Park also were reluctant to attribute petty behavior to women. As one participant explained, women are just more open than men about discussing problems, and this openness is sometimes interpreted as "bitchy." Another, too, thought that the Queen Bee stereotype is a "bad rap." And, she made the point that since women are overworked and underpaid, they "have every right to be bitchy."

Women's Lack of Self-Esteem and Undervaluing Their Worth

The not-so-subtle messages stemming from male dominance in the workplace contribute to women's lack of self-esteem and undervaluing their worth. As an owner of a publications design business noted, many women seem to have an unjustified lack of confidence. She believed that when women entered the workforce, they questioned themselves in a way men never did. That is, some women seemed to feel they were not ready for success or family pressures did not allow them to succeed. Thus, women's self-esteem suffered.

Women's devaluation was linked by many research participants to women's timidity about salary negotiation. On this point, several women contended that women are much more likely than men to take a smaller salary than they deserve. As an editor for a national trade association put it, "Women are too grateful."

An example is an associate director of research for a national agency, who admitted that she sometimes lacks self-confidence and "tolerates a little more responsibility" than she is being paid for. As she contended:

> Women have this bad habit of letting people pile work on them without saying, "What are you going to do for me?" or "How is it going to be paid for?" Women will just do things without asking for more pay or promotion. Men don't do that.

Several of the women in the focus group at Melbourne agreed. As one participant contended: "Women don't know how to ask for raises. We don't know how to ask for what we want." Another explained that this timidity is part of female socialization. That is, women learn that "it's not nice to talk about money; it's embarrassing."

Other women also linked women's ineptness at salary negotiation to gender roles. As a director of development for a school of journalism at a state university contended, being aggressive about this issue is viewed as "inappropriate" behavior for women.

Several women brought up another point: The salary problem for women is exacerbated by the "dual career issue" or "second income syndrome." That is, some women will take a lower salary because they see their income as complementary to or secondary to their spouse's salary. Or, employers offer women less because they assume women can rely on their spouse's salary.

However, not all of these women undervalue themselves nor are uncomfortable with salary issues. For example, a vice president/group manager of a national agency argued that she never has felt timid about her abilities. And, she contended that she always has been outspoken when it comes to salaries and raises. Her approach involves "strategic thinking, convincing people, mothering, nurturing."

A related issue--women's fear of risk-taking--also was cited by research participants. Some mentioned their own fear of risks, acknowledging that they have gotten comfortable in positions and

stayed too long.

Too Few Female Role Models and Mentors

Several women pointed out that male dominance means a shortage of female role models, which contributes to women's not getting groomed in business skills. And, the women in the focus group at College Park discussed how the presence of high-ranking women can make a real difference for other women. One participant recalled attending a meeting of a board of directors that included women. She stated that simply having other women to join in the restroom was affirming. As she noted, "You suddenly realized what the men knew all along."

A related issue was raised by several research participants who have been role models: They are tired of having to be the "representative" for women and fighting for women. A director of promotion for a professional sports team admitted that having to repeatedly speak up for women gets "tedious" and has made her "jaded." As she stated: "You get so tired; you think I shouldn't have to do this. You either say just screw it or keep fighting back."

Women's Discomfort with or Lack of Knowledge about Male-Defined Rules for Advancement

Many research participants also pointed out that women are either uncomfortable with "playing the game" by men's rules or have not been schooled in the political strategizing men learn from one another (or both). An example is a coordinator of community relations for a county school system, who acknowledged her discomfort with the "stressful politics" that go with accruing power in the male-dominated sphere of educational administration.

This practitioner contended that men aspire to these positions for money and power. Thus, advancing involves competition and confrontation. Women, according to her, are there for "more accurate reasons" (they want to help children). Given this, men's games for succeeding are at odds with her female values.

However, several women argued that women's apprehension over politics does not stem from discomfort with the rules. Instead, women's anxiety is linked to lack of knowledge about the rules. And, once women overcome this fear, they can play organizational politics as well as anyone.

A county director of external affairs for a telephone company conceded though that, for women, "business is a different animal." Thus, "women don't know how to get what they want." On this point, she asserted that women are too direct; they do not realize that things are accomplished by coalition building--not by going and asking for something point blank. Similarly, several other women argued that women are not socialized to develop the "contacts" they will need for advancement.

Some women mentioned another disadvantage for women when it comes to political strategizing--women are not team players. These women asserted that men can wound one another and walk off the field arm-in-arm. Women in the same situation would personalize the exchange and feel hurt.

However, a director of communications for a state solar energy center disagreed with the assertion that men have special talents for team interaction. As she stated, men may have played team sports, but the experience did not do them much good. That is, except for collegiality, men have no advantages in team-building skills.

Outmoded and Unchanging Attitudes of Senior Men

Another obstacle related to male dominance is the outmoded and unchanging attitudes of the "senior set" of men who are at the top of organizations. Several women contended that the "manager generation," or men 45 and up, are "anti-women" and see women as a threat.

A director of marketing and public relations for a national accounting firm noted that her organization wants to be progressive about dealing with women. But, as she argued, the "older men are standing in the way."

The anachronistic attitudes of senior men were discussed in the focus group at College Park. One participant thought that older men do not promote women because these men still have the perception that women are going to have a baby and leave. And, as another noted, women do leave rather than stay in a low-paying, unchallenging job.

Most of the women believed that younger men are more egalitarian than the senior set. For example, one agency owner contended that men 35 and younger have grown up with women in the workforce and do not consider women's presence there an issue.

The attitudes of younger men also were discussed in the focus group at Melbourne. Arguing that young men are different, one participant cited an example of a male intern who did hold not stereotypes about women. Another, however, was not so sure. She believed that "the sons of the old boys have learned some of the same attitudes."

In the focus group at College Park, one participant commented on this trend. She argued that in the 1970s, progress for women was made. That is, it was socially unacceptable to be sexist then. The 1980s, however, brought a resurgence of "Neanderthal" attitudes toward women. Thus, for her, the "pendulum is swinging back."

In the same group, another participant raised a related issue. She worried that because the 1970s did effect progress for women, men are no longer making a conscious effort to deal with discrimination; that is, too many men erroneously assume they no longer have to.

Conflicting Messages for Women

Another problem is conflicting messages for women. On this point, many research participants pointed out that masculine attributes for managers are esteemed; but when women display these traits, women are evaluated negatively. For example, several women commented on the "whiner assumption." That is, assertiveness is prized in organizations, but when women assert, too often they are dubbed "whiners."

Similarly, some women contended that people perceive women's strength as "bitchiness." As a director of development for a school of journalism at a state university explained, when a man is aggressive, others believe he is acting appropriately. But, when a woman displays aggressiveness, others believe something is wrong; she must be suffering from "PMS," for example.

In the focus group at College Park, one participant revealed that she finds herself "monitoring" her behavior to avoid being perceived as too female. She recalled how, after reprimanding male subordinates for what she thought was obnoxious behavior, these men later "coddled" her as if her reaction were inappropriate. That is, the men seemed to think she was having some "female problem" that made her overly sensitive.

Women's Balancing Act

Another significant barrier is many women's having to balance the competing demands of career and family. On this point, several research participants raised the issue of women as the caregivers in society. And, some women noted that the "balancing act" is made more difficult by the societal myth that the "fast track" is right for everyone.

A vice president of marketing and public relations for a non-profit health care organization made the point that women feel guilty about neglecting the parenting role. As a communications manager for a scientific instrument manufacturer pointed out, if she had children, she would want to be with them; she would "feel the pressure and tug."

On this point, a senior counselor for a national agency asserted that the "idea of the superwoman is a myth." She contended that women have to make choices; they cannot do it all.

As an owner of a local agency explained, "the system" is not set up for managing a career and a family. She conceded, though, that women are finding creative ways, such as job sharing, to strike a balance.

However, a director of community relations for a county school system stated that trying to manage children and work has stopped her from considering other, more demanding positions and means that she does not "do evening functions."

One participant stated in the focus group at Melbourne that, for older women, these issues are "moot." That is, now that she is beyond childbearing, her career "continues to gain momentum." But, she acknowledged that even though her children are grown and she is divorced, she is still the caretaker; she still feels responsible.

In the same group, another participant was uncomfortable with making broad generalizations about career and family to all women. She pointed out that, like herself, many women are choosing not to have children. However, another woman countered that even though all women may not have divided loyalties, others perceive that they do and evaluate them accordingly.

The stress from women's having to perform the balancing act is worsened if there is a lack of

support from home. Several women revealed that the chauvinistic attitudes of their spouses were constraining and, in some cases, a major factor in their divorces.

Some women thought that the trend toward men's greater participation in domestic duties would ease the tension of the balancing act for women. For example, several women noted that their male colleagues seem more concerned with family. That is, they see men leaving the office earlier than they used to, transporting children to and from day care, and staying at home when children are sick.

Others took exception to this viewpoint. A county director of external affairs for a telephone company argued that "men definitely have an advantage in the working world" because women do more than their share of domestic duties. And, as she put it, "I don't see a lot of change."

Gender Stereotypes

Still another major impediment mentioned by research participants was pervasive gender stereotypes. The most ominous of these stereotypes was others' misconceptions about women's abilities at work. As many of these women stated, women have to "prove" themselves because others are too quick to assume women's inferiority. Some women expressed this dilemma in terms of women's having to "try harder."

In the focus group at College Park, one participant provided an example. She contended that when dealing with a new man at the office, she repeatedly has to demonstrate that she is "just as bright" as any man.

Other women maintained that women still are not being taken as seriously as men by male managers. For example, a senior counselor for a national agency contended that men continue to be a little uncertain about women's skills. And, as she stated, "Men's psyche has been traumatically challenged," and it "takes a long time for stereotypes to change; prejudice still exists."

Most research participants believed that for women to succeed, women must counter gender stereotypes by being "superwomen." On this point, an owner of a publications design business maintained that some of the men she sees in vice presidential slots are "questionable," but the women in these positions "have earned it." As she jested, she will know equity has been achieved "when an incompetent woman can get as far as an incompetent man."

An independent consultant, however, denied ever feeling like she had to prove herself (although she acknowledged that women have to work harder). She remembered working on a major account with a predominately male team and maintained that these men never treated her like a "woman."

In the focus group at Melbourne, one participant called this experience "privatization." That is, successful women are privatized, or considered separate from the female group. In other words, successful women are "different," in a private category.

Several research participants mentioned another problem related to gender stereotypes--some

men are not comfortable working for women. Some women commented that their male staff members have not liked taking orders from a woman. A director of public relations for a non-profit children's hospital mentioned that her male subordinate always bypasses her in the chain of command.

In the focus group at Gainesville, one participant raised a related concern: Is gender stereotyping compounded by women who have been set up to fail? On this point, she hypothesized that perceptions about women's incompetence may stem from the performance of poorly-prepared women who have been "pushed forward" through affirmative action. Other participants disagreed. One stated that she cannot think of one instance that fits this scenario. Another maintained that quite the opposite happens. That is, the women who advance are often superior to men in high positions.

Not all of these women, though, believed that gender stereotypes are an issue for women. Several women argued that individual credibility is the key to success.

Sexual Harassment and "Lookism"

Blatant sexual harassment was cited as a problem by three research participants. "Lookism," a form of covert sexual harassment, emerged more frequently as an issue. This problem refers to others' tendency to focus more--either positively or negatively--on women's appearance than job performance.

A director of development for a school of journalism at a state university provided the most pronounced example of overt harassment. In her position as fundraiser, she has encountered uncomfortable situations so often she described her work environment as a "den of wolves." This practitioner went on to explain how some men--particularly older ones--still believe that if a woman is traveling alone or out after dark by herself, she is available.

An owner of a local agency also had been sexually harassed. For her, this abuse was "the straw that broke the camel's back" in her previous job, prompting her to open her own business.

An editor at a trade association also mentioned receiving unwanted sexual advances from men. For her, out-of-town conferences have been particularly perilous.

More troublesome for this practitioner, however, is "lookism." Others in her organization harass her in this way by referring to her as a "bimbo" and the "sex kitten." She attributed some of this to professional jealousies (the tension became so bad that she subsequently was "forced out").

Although she did not believe lookism had been a problem for her, a publications director for a college of a state university asserted that this tendency does exist to some degree, especially in initial encounters. As she argued, "It's best (for women) to be moderately not ugly."

Several women maintained that lookism is more a problem for attractive women than for good looking men. In the focus group at Melbourne, one participant contended that when a woman walks in a room, men see "body parts first." The same is not true for men, though, she added.

In focus group at College Park, lookism also was discussed. One participant thought that

men's focusing on women's physical attributes was the "ultimate power play" by men to demean women's professionalism.

However, several research participants pointed out that women are guilty of lookism too. As an independent consultant acknowledged, she might not take a very beautiful woman as seriously as an average looking woman--especially if the beautiful woman is "too feminine." As she pointed out, "Big hair and a sweet voice turn me off."

Marketplace Factors

Still another explanation for the glass ceiling problem in public relations was marketplace factors. As an owner of a publications design business pointed out, organizational downsizing is occurring at the same time baby boomers are primed to fill management posts. Further, the downsizing has hit the ranks (middle and upper-middle posts) where public relations typically is located. The result is stiffer competition for fewer jobs and, possibly, lowered salaries for women and men.

An owner of a local agency argued that the current economy makes the marketplace "more cutthroat." On this point, a publications director for a college of a state university recalled that over 100 people applied for one public relations position in her department.

A director of communications for a state solar energy center linked the glass ceiling problem in part to a labor pool in public relations that is abundant, young, and female. Or, as one agency owner put it, the voluminous number of women in public relations means "there is more junk out there."

A related issue is the concern that because men have become a rarity in public relations, men are increasingly prized at the expense of qualified women. As a senior counselor for a national agency argued, women's devaluation might be explained in part by supply and demand. That is, "men are more valuable because they are scarce."

On this point, several women explained how they have been pressured to hire a man. As one participant stated in the focus group at College Park, others have asked her, "Can't you get a man in this (corporate communications) department?" (however, she and several other women mentioned that they have had difficulty finding qualified men to hire).

Taking the opposite position, several women in the focus group in Gainesville argued that marketplace factors will help advance equity for women. For example, one participant pointed out that white men soon will be a minority in the U.S. workforce. Thus, marketplace pressure will demand hiring and promoting women. Another agreed, contending that more women will be needed to fill positions, and, as women gain experience, gender gaps will erode.

Ageism

A final barrier mentioned by some research participants was ageism. This problem usually refers to discrimination against seniors, but several women felt they have been shut out of positions

they were qualified for because of their youth.

Several women recalled how glad they were to turn 30. As a director of development for a school of journalism at a state university stated, when she was in her twenties and in a maternity dress, people did not take her seriously. She pointed out, however, that some people still refuse to do business with her. As she lamented, "Being young, female, and pretty are three liabilities."

The focus group at College Park also addressed ageism. One participant noted that she believes her youth might be part of the reason why the management team where she works has not accepted her. However, this practitioner went on to speculate that if she waits around until she is considered "old enough," ageism then might resurface and she will be considered too old. As she joked, there may be just a "three-year slot" during which women are considered the appropriate age.

Research Question 2: Which liberal/radical feminist strategies can effect equity for women?

Liberal Feminist Strategies:

Buying in and Working the System

Many research participants argued that women must "work" the male-dominated system rather than fighting it. And, a director of community relations for a county school system contended that women sometimes get so busy doing their work that they forget to do so.

A county director of external affairs for a telephone company made the same point in the focus group at Melbourne. As she stated, women are so busy doing their jobs and believing good things will come to them that they forget they need a strategic plan.

A Ph.D. student in journalism believed that this plan involves making a choice: Buy into the system and work twice as hard as your male colleagues or refuse to and give up the rewards.

A director of communications for a state solar energy center also talked about the necessity of women's "buying in." As she argued, to make changes in the system, women need power. Therefore, women must assimilate into the power structure even if doing so demands personal compromise. For her, compromising simply means that women take two steps forward and one step back. The result is, of course, a step forward.

In the focus group at Melbourne, one participant called this dilemma the "vicious circle." As she explained, until women get into positions of power, they cannot make changes.

Impression Management

Most suggestions for working the system involved impression management, or women's monitoring their behavior and appearance. As a director of promotion for a professional sports team argued, "It's (women's success) all in how you carry yourself and how you react to yourself."

A coordinator of community relations for a county school system suggested that women should "stay female, but not too female." A director of community relations for a family entertainment park also argued that women's denying their gender "would be the wrong thing to do." That is, women

should "think like a woman" but not "make an issue out of it." Similarly, one owner of a local agency eschewed the advice that women should be "little men."

A director of public relations for a non-profit children's hospital suggested, however, that women should do things as though they were men. Or, as a director of communications for a state solar energy center stated, women need to take on the attributes of maleness they are perceived to be lacking in.

An owner of a local agency spoke at length about what these attributes are. She advised that women should know when to keep their "mouth shut" instead of talking before they think, align themselves with politically strategic people, take business politics seriously, and dress appropriately. Further, women should not apologize for family concerns, nor should they play the victim.

An independent consultant also had plenty of advice for women wanting to create a professional image. She believed that women should "cut their hair, dress more conservatively than they naturally would, and learn how to speak well."

Another aspect of impression management that a director of publications for a college of state university pointed out is women's maintaining visibility. She explained that she maintains visibility by attending every college function regardless of whether or not she is "required" to go.

A communications manager of a hospice organization pointed out visibility's link to women's being accessible. That is, women have to be visible in their organizations' important "circles" because this makes them accessible.

Finding the Right Place

Another aspect of working the system involves women's finding the right place. As a communications manager of a hospice organization maintained, women need to be "careful" about where they go and select organizations where they can be effective. Further, women should not fight organizations where they do not succeed; they should leave instead.

In the focus group at Gainesville, one participant made the same point. She lamented seeing "excellent women" in "bad situations who "stay and beat their heads." Her advice for these women was to move on; women's staying where they are not valued is self-defeating.

A director of development for a school of journalism at a state university also thought women should avoid places where women are "destined for failure." She contended that too often women fall into a vicious circle of staying in bad situations because their self-esteem has been depleted and they become afraid to leave. Thus, others' perception of women's ineffectiveness become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Attracting Men Back into Public Relations

Another strategy was attracting men back into public relations. Several women made this point, arguing that a gender balance is healthy. And, in the focus group at Melbourne, one participant

wondered if recruiting men might help bolster public relations' status by downplaying its association with women.

Several research participants acknowledged hiring men as a "strategy" for appealing to a more diverse clientele. An owner of a local agency, for example, explained that she is hiring two men for this reason. And, a retired vice president/group manager of a national agency recalled that her agency's gender imbalance left the group going out of its way to hire men. As she explained, "Some clients relate better to men, so we tried to service that; you had to balance your team."

An owner of a publications design business, however, found this strategy unappealing. She believed that energy should be directed toward educating people in management about the "quality women" already in public relations who are ready to ascend. Any remaining energy then should be spent on helping women develop business skills so they will be ready to seize opportunities.

Learning How to Fight for Salaries

Still another suggestion was offered by several women: Women need to learn how to fight for the salary they deserve. An independent consultant made this point, stating that women should learn marketplace salary levels and refuse to take less. Further, women should ignore people who tell them that a particular job is the only one they are going to get.

A vice president/group manager of a national agency made a similar point, arguing that no one finds salary negotiation a fun thing to do. But women must learn that if they have worked hard, they need to let others know and demand financial rewards.

An associate director of research for a national agency, too, argued that women need to assert about money matters. She pointed out, however, that sometimes women do not have access to salary data for their organization. When she found herself in this situation, she acted on the assumption that she was making less. When her manager confirmed this, she was able to start negotiating a raise.

Insisting on Inclusion in Management Decision Making

Another aspect of working the system is women's speaking up about being included in management decision making. As a director of promotion for a professional sports team explained, "If a decision has been made that you should have been a part of, point it out to them (other managers)." She noted that she has done this; and, as a result, she subsequently has been consulted on a lot of issues.

Similarly, in the focus group at Melbourne, one participant argued that getting into the managerial role is up to the public relations function. As she stated, doing so may involve forcing managers to listen to the public relations department even if it takes shouting at them.

Denying Discrimination Exists

A director of public relations for a non-profit children's hospital raised still another issue. She believed women's success would be inhibited if women worry too much about discrimination. That is,

their concerns may become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

A media relations director for a private, technical university agreed, saying it is important for women to resist assuming that they are being "perceived as a woman first." That is, women should not feel that they need to be defensive. Thus, she advised that women should not "deal with the problem (sexism) until it's there." They should "walk in objectively."

Making Choices

One final point was mentioned by several women--making choices. As a senior counselor for a national agency argued, women cannot expect to be a traditional mother and a corporate executive simultaneously. A communications manager of a hospice organization, too, thought that women must make sacrifices. And, she stated, women generally are less willing than men to do so.

Developing the Skills and Knowledge Needed in Public Relations

Several research participants argued that equity for women could be advanced by women's developing the skills and knowledge needed in public relations. Some women thought that an important part of this process is learning how to do research. That is, the tangible results that research can provide give practitioners something valuable to bring to the management table.

Related to doing research is the argument that women should get an advanced degree. On this point, a director of communications for a state solar energy center asserted that for women, an advanced degree acts as a "surrogate penis."

A senior counselor for a national agency pointed out that getting the "broadest possible education" is an important part of advancement in public relations. For her, liberal arts and statistics were key areas.

A communications manager of a hospice organization, however, pointed out the importance of getting a good foundation in basic skills. And, she added that being innovative and creative were important attributes to develop.

A director of media relations for a private, technical university stressed the need for practitioners to stay informed--particularly about the business of their organization. She also emphasized the importance of practitioners' getting a strong base in a specialization.

Along similar lines, a communications manager for a manufacturer of scientific instruments encouraged women to develop their skills "to whatever height." In doing so, she thought women's developing risk-taking skills is very important.

A director of marketing and public relations for a non-profit health care organization pointed out the importance of getting operational experience. Part of this, she stated, involves women's overcoming their orientation toward exclusively verbal abilities.

An owner of a local agency emphasized managing public relations strategically. She stressed the positive correlation between strategic management and practitioners' status.

One aspect of strategic management mentioned by several women was evaluating results of communication programs and then educating management about public relations' contributions. As an independent consultant argued, "Management needs to be better educated about what public relations can do for business." Similarly, an owner of local agency stated that the "true test" of women's success in public relations will be in the results women can show. And part of this is letting others know about good work.

However, a director of communications for a state solar energy center presented a counterargument. She worried that management's validation of public relations may be just lip service. As she contended, CEOs are counseled to say that public relations is important, but that does not make it reality. Further, she asserted that "if mostly women do it (public relations), it probably does not have as much value."

Demonstrating Professionalism

A commitment to professionalism was another strategy cited by some of the women. As an owner of a local agency stated, women must demonstrate professionalism in a proactive way. That is, women must be aware of the misconceptions about public relations that still linger and address the issue head on. Part of doing so is an effort to "weed out old-style hacks."

In the focus group at Melbourne, one participant agreed that public relations needs to be "rewarding and encouraging professionalism." Doing so would diminish inaccurate perceptions about the field and drive out inept practitioners.

Several women thought that an important step in furthering professionalism is accreditation. They argued that accreditation might help bolster practitioners' status and salaries.

An independent consultant went further by suggesting licensing. On this point, she bemoaned some practitioners' lack of professionalism and its effects. As she stated, "Women should realize what they are doing to themselves and men should look at what they are doing to the profession."

Membership in professional associations was another suggestion. A director of publications for a college of a state university has found that participating in professional groups has given her the confidence she previously lacked.

Women's Empowering Themselves

Several research participants believed that women's empowering themselves through networking would help. Many mentioned women's mentoring other women. These women believed that these relationships would help provide needed role modeling for women.

A communications manager for a manufacturer of scientific instruments, for example, encouraged women to "keep a soft spot for women in the world" and give each other "a hand" or "a push." She recommended that women avoid seeing other women as threats. Instead, women should realize that helping other women only will benefit all women in the long run.

A director of community relations for an international airport agreed but pointed out that women's networking is not enough; women have to "credential" each other. That is, women have to help other women attain the credentials they need for advancement.

Along similar lines, several women suggested a mentor program for women while they are still in school. An owner of a publications design business suggested bringing into the college classroom women who have "gone through the hard knocks."

An owner of a local agency also acknowledged the importance of mentoring but argued that the sex of the mentor really does not matter. Like several women, she noted how one of her male bosses had helped her.

Raising a caveat about mentoring, some women believed that women's networking should not be taken to the extreme. That is, they denounced a women's separatist movement by pointing out that maintaining and fostering links with men are crucial.

Another strategy for women's empowering themselves involves women's opening their own businesses. As a communications manager for a manufacturer of scientific instruments pointed out, the "boldness of purpose" in doing so can be strengthening.

One agency owner agreed, explaining that she empowered herself by leaving internal public relations and becoming an external consultant. As she stated, "I can manage my way more than I could as an insider."

Radical Feminist Strategies

A few respondents went beyond liberalism's strategies for effecting equity by pointing out needed institutional changes. As one participant argued in the focus group at College Park, the obstacles that women face are systemic: "To expect a woman no matter how good she is to hurdle all these barriers is unrealistic." Thus, she called for getting past "blaming the victim" and refusing to "let institutions off the hook" for discrimination.

Making a similar point, a manager of public relations for a manufacturer of shuttle booster rockets contended that factors external to women will effect change rather than the efforts of women. As she stated, "A woman should not have to be banging her head against a glass ceiling; the culture and the environment should be removing the glass ceiling."

The radical suggestions that these women put forth can be divided into three categories--prescriptions for changes in society, organizations, and public relations. However, the distinction made here among these levels is a forced one; none is independent of the others.

Prescriptions for Society

At the societal level, mentioned most often was the need for a fundamental reassessment of societal values. As a Ph.D. student in journalism argued, American culture mandates that work is valued before family. This dilemma is particularly vexing for women since society assigns them family

concerns.

Addressing this issue in the focus group at College Park, this woman called for societal values that legitimize workers' having "total lives." That is, people should not be dubbed less serious about their careers simply because they care about other things. She pointed out, however, that women and men must speak out about the importance of family before real change is effected. That is, as long as men accept or promote the standard of "work before everything," lone women who insist otherwise will receive "notches" against them.

Another societal change advocated by some research participants was re-negotiating gender roles at home. As a coordinator of community relations for a county school system pointed out, women's entrance into the workplace means that both men and women have to negotiate new positions in the domestic sphere.

On this point, a county director of external affairs for a telephone argued that for the most part women have accommodated their spouses by taking on more than a fair share of housework or making their careers subordinate. For her, women need to realize it is "okay" to let their spouses do some adjusting.

Another society-level recommendation had to do with diminishing gender stereotypes through education. In the focus group at Gainesville, one participant argued that some young women still are ignorant about opportunities for women; these women believe that getting married and having children are their only options. She thought that better education would allow these women to make more informed choices. Another participant asserted that this education starts with parents.

Several women in the focus group at Melbourne also made this point. One participant, however, stressed the importance of raising enlightened sons. That is, men's attitudes must be changed too.

Some of the women in the focus group at Gainesville called for re-evaluating the societal assumption that everyone can and should aspire to top organizational levels. As one participant argued, society needs to legitimize "being the very best at the middle level." However, another thought that some women must continue to aspire to and achieve top billing because women's doing so demonstrates women can and do succeed at high posts.

Prescriptions for Organizations

Several research participants suggested that at the organizational level, the most fundamental change needed involves redefining the inherent masculinism in management. The easiest way to do this, according to a communications manager for a manufacturer of scientific instruments, is to have more women in charge. That is, she asserted that organizational culture is an "outgrowth of the personality of the people in top level." Thus, as long as men dominate those levels, masculine values will be esteemed.

Other women thought a move toward an androgynous definition of manager would help. An owner of a local agency specifically advocated such a change. As she stated, women and men need to understand each other better and communicate more effectively by developing the masculine and feminine in themselves. She argued that this development will eliminate barriers by allowing men and women to put themselves in the others' place.

A second group of prescriptions focused on changes in organizational policies. On this point, several research participants asserted that organizations typically have been designed with men's traditional roles in mind; these institutions are not set up to accommodate women and families.

Given this, some women delineated policies that might help organizations become more accommodating. For example, a marketing communications director for a private university called for clear and consistent policies that make the workplace more family friendly. Her suggestions included flex time and on-site day care.

A senior counselor at a national agency, too, pointed out the importance of day care and parental leave policies. And, she noted that the United States is "way behind" other industrialized countries where family-oriented policies are "taken-for-granted."

A director of marketing and public relations for a national accounting firm argued, however, that policy change will occur only on the heels of "a lot of writing and talking about" the need for modifications. Thus, she argued that fields in which there are a lot of women, such as public relations, can make a difference. That is, when women dominate a function, organizational policy makers more readily can see that they must accommodate women or face the possibility of losing their workforce.

An associate director of research for a national agency made the important point, though, that none of these policy changes really advances equity for women as long as societal values about devotion to work go unchallenged. As she noted, her agency "gives lip service to job sharing, but there is this unspoken feeling that everyone else gives 120 percent, why can't you (the job sharer)?"

Prescriptions for Public Relations

The most predominate recommendation for public relations involved educating others--particularly top management--about the importance of public relations. A manager of communications for a hospice organization called this "PR for PR."

Similarly, in the focus group at College Park, one participant stressed the importance of practitioners' educating the business management community about public relations. She believed that, in general, public relations has not done enough "cross industry fertilization." As she said, practitioners should take their skills and "give them to the rest of the world."

A corresponding suggestion put forth by several women was that professional associations in public relations must play a role in educating management about public relations. As a vice president of a local agency pointed out, professional associations need to start communicating with CEOs and

enlighten them about the importance of public relations.

This brings up the suggestion of integrating business courses into the public relations curriculum, a recommendation made by many women and one that surfaced in all three focus groups. In general, these women believed that the stakes for entering public relations should be raised by requiring practitioners to be communicators and managers.

Several women went even further by wondering if public relations should assimilate into business schools. As one participant stated in the focus group at College Park, if public relations is really part of management, then perhaps public relations should be in management schools. And, she wondered whether universities should even have undergraduate programs in public relations given the weaknesses of the typical curriculum. For her, majoring in business and then getting a master's degree in communications might be a better approach.

A vice president/group manager of a national agency wondered if the disintegration of public relations per se might help. Pondering the future of the field, she thought, "Maybe public relations won't be public relations anymore." She speculated that "public relations" might (and possibly should) give way to a more generalized "communications" approach.

A related suggestion was addressing the gender imbalance in university faculty. As several women contended, the power structure within most communication faculties continues to be male.

A Ph.D. student in journalism pointed out, however, that new scholars are infusing communications departments with fresh perspectives. And, she believed that positive changes for women will be effected as "more people with a vision of a different future articulate that vision every chance they get." Further, even if female faculty have to "buy in" to be promoted and tenured, their individual successes filter to the larger community of women.

Another step mentioned by several women was that professional associations in public relations specifically should address the glass ceiling problem. They argued that professional organizations have an obligation to keep gender issues on the table. And, as one woman pointed out, professional associations are uniquely capable of doing so because, unlike most institutions, professional societies are often headed by women.

DISCUSSION

Toward a Feminist Theory of Public Relations: On Society, Organizations, Public Relations, and Women

Explaining discrimination against female practitioners is the first step in building a feminist theory of public relations. The second step involves positing a social agenda that outlines the steps necessary for combatting women's subjugation.

Some of the elements of the program presented here are unique to women in public relations. Other steps, however, speak to a wider plan that must be implemented before equity for female

practitioners will be realized. In other words, discrimination against women in public relations cannot be separated from the organizational and societal systems that produce gender biases.

This agenda augments participants' recommendations by emphasizing institutional initiatives. The focus is governmental action, organizational policies, and programs within public relations that would help eradicate discrimination against female practitioners.

However, this plan concludes by positing several of the liberal feminist tactics suggested by women in this study. Indeed, some of the liberal strategies that were criticized in the literature review have enabled these women to tackle discrimination. The fusing of this liberal counsel with more radical propositions should provide an inclusive program for effecting equity for women in public relations.

This agenda no doubt will seem optimistic. However, an idealistic scenario was developed deliberately to underscore the dramatic gap between women's current status and equity for women.

On Society

Raising levels of awareness about sexism. The most fundamental barrier to women's progress is the pervasive but inaccurate perception that the battle has been won. Carr-Ruffino, Baack, Flipper, Hunter-Sloan, and Olivolo (1992) stated this problem well. They explained that although many people became enlightened about sexism during the 1960s and 1970s, many others remained ignorant. Further, many of today's young women take liberation for granted, not realizing that the opening of doors has been very recent, many doors remain shut, and some that were opened are "quietly closing again" (p. 151). Even more surprising is their finding that among women managers in high posts, few advocate legal remedies for breaking through the glass ceiling.

All of these sentiments come at a time when more than 80 percent of full-time working mothers make less than $20,000 a year, the average woman's pay still falls as far behind the average man's as it did 20 years ago, and women still assume 70 percent of household duties (Faludi, quoted in Barbieri, 1991d).[3] These perpetual discrepancies suggest the appropriateness of a new campaign for raising awareness levels about sexism.

Electing women to high government posts. Another societal directive involves women's gaining political power at all levels of government. The National Organization of Women calls this strategy the

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[3] Chapman (1990), however, took issue with feminists' exhorting the persistence of gender-based salary discrepancies. Along these lines, he argued that the pay differential between men and women is not "large and stubborn;" rather, it is "small and shrinking" (p. A13). Citing findings from a study conducted by the Center for the Study of Business and Government, Chapman explained that the salary gap between men and women hardly changed in the 1970s (women earned 59 cents for every dollar men earned). During the next 10 years, though, as women became better educated and more serious about careers, a substantial closing occurred (women's pay rose to 68 percent of men's). And, among women with no children, women's pay was 86 percent of what men without children earned.

Despite Chapman's opposition, most analyses support feminists' assertion that gender-based gaps in salary persist (see, for example, Kuhn, 1992).

"feminization of power" (Santich, 1991, p. 12). As NOW President Patricia Ireland (quoted in Santich, 1991) stated, "We're going to get serious now [about electing women to office]. We're not going to beg these guys for our rights anymore. We're going to replace them, and we're going to take power" (p. 12).

Closer to public relations, women's recent and continued election to high posts in professional associations within public relations should help advance equity. This will work, though, only if these women use their influence to address gender issues. These efforts should extend beyond describing the problem and prescribing what women as individuals can do to combat sexism. Professional associations should map a strategy for dismantling the institutional barriers women in public relations face.

Passing federal legislation that supports working parents. Another societal initiative is enacting federal laws supportive of working parents. As Thompson, Thomas, and Maier (1992) pointed out, little institutional progress will occur along these lines without direction and support from the federal government. In short, government needs to mandate and support a pro-work-family stance (Latimer, cited in Thompson, Thomas, & Maier, 1992). This step would go a long way toward addressing women's "bread and butter" concerns (Friedan, quoted in Carr-Ruffino et al., 1992).

On this point, Vanderfolk (quoted in Barbieri, 1992b) argued that the government has a long way to go. As she noted, "The big gap in all of this (support for family in the workplace) is the federal government" (p. E4). She argued that at this level there is little commitment to children and to family values, even though politicians "pay lip service" to these ideals (p. E4).

To move beyond this, the most obvious step is passage of comprehensive family leave legislation[4] allowing employees to take time off to care for children, an ailing partner, or elderly parents. The United States might follow the example of the European Community nations, which recently passed an accord that guarantees women at least 14 weeks (many European countries allow more) of pregnancy leave at wages higher than sick pay and some at full pay ("Paid maternity leave in Europe," 1991). And, the agreement mandates safe working conditions for pregnant women and forbids organizations' firing women because of pregnancy.

Also on the federal agenda should be passing national legislation that requires employers to retain jobs for women after childbirth. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 only requires companies to treat men and women the same; the measure does not guarantee a woman's job will still be there after she gives birth ("Pregnant workers find jobs targeted," 1991).

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[4] The recent legislation signed by President Clinton provided only unpaid leave. Although this measure is progress, many workers cannot afford to take leave without pay.

On this point, Wendt and Slonaker (cited in "Pregnant workers find jobs targeted," 1991) found that 23 percent of women on maternity leave who wanted to return to their jobs were not rehired. But, only two percent of women who had taken time off for other medical reasons were fired.

Larson (quoted in "Maternity creates pregnant pause," 1991) called for the same federal measures after finding that pregnant women are discriminated against and stigmatized in the workplace. As she argued: "Pregnancy for the professional too often is considered abnormal or malignant. It makes many co-workers and bosses fear that the pregnant worker will never return from a soft belly to a hard nose" (p. E19). Larson's research showed that these perceptions often result in firing, demoting, or denying benefits to pregnant women. More subtle biases include others' resentment, loss of credibility with colleagues and clients, and fewer opportunities at important assignments or travel.

Federal policies for child care assistance also are needed. Several superficial efforts have been attempted unsuccessfully, but passage of a complete package remains elusive (Carr-Ruffino et al., 1992). Possible components of a plan include tax credits, employer incentives, grants for child care, and workplace flexibility such as part-time work, job sharing, working at a home office, and so on (Carr-Ruffino et al., 1992).

Outlawing sexual harassment. Federal legislation is also needed to outlaw sexual harassment ("Feminist: Outlaw sexual harassment," 1991). A recent New York Times-CBS news poll (cited in "Many women say they're harassed," 1991, p. A6) documented that four out of 10 women say they have been victims of sexual harassment. However, few of these women report the problem.

As Krohne (cited in "Report: Harassment common in Navy," 1992) found, women silently endure sexual harassment because they fear reprisal and believe that pursuing the issue is fruitless. O'Neal (1991) explained that women who pursue harassment charges often get little sympathy from their companies. This is particularly true when the charges involve a high-ranking man (O'Neal, 1991). And, as Lev (quoted in O'Neal, 1991) noted, "A lot of this stuff (harassment) is done privately. It's just his word against hers, and that deters a lot of women from coming forward" (p. A15).

This veil of secrecy ensures that proving sexual harassment charges no doubt always will be problematic. But, a federal mandate outlawing sexual harassment would send a clear message underscoring the repugnancy of this behavior. Moreover, this edict would provide organizations a strong incentive for establishing and enforcing sexual harassment policies (O'Leary & Ickovics, 1992).

Recouping affirmative action losses. Another societal initiative has to do with raising levels of awareness about the regression in affirmative action policy that occurred during the Reagan and Bush administrations (Carr-Ruffino et al., 1992). As Farnham (1989) reported, the 1980s brought a "sawing away at affirmative action's Constitutional supports" (p. 87).

Both women and organizations lose when affirmative action is derailed. For women,

affirmative action deserves at least part of the credit for men's sharing power (Dunn, 1990). For organizations, affirmative action may heighten organizational productivity.

Along these lines, Leonard (cited in Carr-Ruffino et al., 1992) examined government data from 1966 and 1977 and found that employee equity initiatives increased organizational productivity. This is because women who were hired as a result of affirmative action were more productive than their male counterparts (females were 101 percent as productive as white males).

One of the problems with rallying support for affirmative action, though, is the contention that affirmative action amounts to reverse discrimination. Dunn (1990), however, pointed out that this argument suffers from an absence of proof. He posited that, if anything, those benefitting from affirmative action "have had to be better than the white males with whom they have competed" (p. G6). Thus, for him, complaining about reverse discrimination amounts to little more than "whining" (p. G6).

Mandating equal representation for women in government and organizations supported by government. A basic tenet of American jurisprudence is that government should be representative of its people. However, at no level does the U.S. government live up to this principle; women are under-represented throughout. To close the gap, regulations should be enacted that mandate equal representation for women in government, particularly at middle and high levels.

An example of this directive recently was passed in the Florida legislature. The Governmental Operations Committee unanimously approved a proposal that requires gender balance on state decision-making or regulatory boards, commissions, councils, and committees whose members are appointed by the governor or other state officials ("Lawmakers have a plan to close the gender gap," 1992).

Policies such as this should be instituted throughout the government. Further, the government should not be let off the hook if "qualified" women cannot be found. If this is the case, better recruitment procedures should be instituted. Should this strategy not produce a qualified pool, training for women should be provided.

This call extends to organizations whose main support is government funds. This includes public schools and universities,[5] groups receiving government grants or subsidies, and business firms with government contracts.

Along these lines, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs is responsible for ensuring that organizations holding government contracts do not

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[5] As Blum (1991) noted, women make up only 13.6 percent of full professors and only 12 percent of college presidents (figures for public and private universities).

discriminate in employment decisions. However, the DOL's 1991 study, "The Glass Ceiling Initiative," found that a number of companies "were not living up to the good faith efforts to meet affirmative action requirements" (U.S. Department of Labor, A Report on the Glass Ceiling Initiative, 1991, p. 4).

Eradicating sexism in education. Federal muscle is also needed to toughen enforcement of Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in schools that receive federal money (Fish, 1992). Such was the conclusion of the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation after sponsoring a study that found, from elementary school on, girls receive less attention in classrooms than boys (cited in Fish, 1992).

Earlier, Sadker and Sadker (cited in Conroy, 1988) found the same thing: Typical classroom interactions favor boys. Additional research findings indicate that favoritism toward boys was manifested in a number of ways, including more feedback, attention, instruction, and remedial assistance (Conroy, 1988). Similarly, a 1989 report issued by The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center and The New England Center for Equity Assistance concluded that the biased education girls receive "contributes to the economic penalties they encounter in the workplace" (quoted in Powers, 1991, p. 7; see also Canter, 1982).[6]

Breaking down gender stereotypes. Another societal strategy has to do with breaking down gender stereotypes. Goldsmith (cited in "Women expect to earn less," 1991) found that a sample of female college students expected to earn $10,000 to $20,000 less than their male counterparts by the time these women reached their parents' age.

Goldsmith was uncertain whether gender stereotypes were the basis of women's perceptions or whether women were just being realistic, given the effects of the glass ceiling. Whatever the cause, though, she encouraged parents to nurture daughters' career aspirations so women will expect (and thus demand) more from their work.

Women's rejecting gender stereotypes is a restricted triumph, though, if men continue to hold prejudices toward women. On this point, Miller and Kruger (1990) questioned the popular belief that young men are free of chauvinistic attitudes and behaviors toward working women. As Cram (quoted in Miller & Kruger, 1990) pointed out: "These men may have 'intellectually' changed their views about what is appropriate in the workplace. But, their emotions and behavior have not quite caught up with what they want to believe" (p. 96).

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[6] The federal government might learn about combatting gender bias in schools from strides made at the county level. An example is Prince Georges County, Md., where the Office of Equity Assurance is incorporating gender sensitivity into the county's four-year plan for expanding multicultural education. Meetings among principals, teachers, counselors, and parents have been held to raise awareness about sexism and propose strategies for overcoming the problem.

On Organizations

Establishing family-friendly policies. A major first step at the organizational level is establishing family-friendly policies. Some progress along these lines is occurring, but most organizations fail to offer programs even for full-time employees ("No daycare program," 1990).

A growing body of research, however, suggests that employees and organizations benefit from a workplace that is supportive of employee needs (see, for example, Barbieri, 1992a; Barbieri, 1992b; "Business-family connection is becoming critical," 1990; Kleiman, 1991a; Schwartz, 1989). Vanderfolk (quoted in Barbieri, 1992b) maintained that family-friendly benefits are not just a way for organizations to "do nice;" these programs help employees perform better because workers are less stressed. And, she noted that these benefits can reduce the costs of absenteeism, lateness, and turnover (see also Beck, 1991).[7]

Rethinking the masculine ethic in organizations. Family-friendly policies are of limited benefit, however, until the value system that predominates in most organizations changes. That is, all of these solutions do nothing to challenge the prevailing assumption within organizations that employees' commitment to family or outside demands necessarily weakens their commitment to their careers.

Making this point, Thompson et al. (1992) called this assumption the "masculine ethic" in organizations and traced its development to the "myth of separate worlds" (p. 69). As they explained, this ethos assigned men's work to the public sphere, relegated women's work to the domestic realm, and stipulated that never should the two meet. Thus, men have been required to act as though they have no "competing loyalties" that would taint "the image of the rational organization man" and "interfere with the primacy of organizational efficiency and production" (pp. 69-70).

For Thompson et al., this organizational script is still being played even though the actors and scenes have changed. Thus, women and men are required to assimilate into the masculine ethic to be accepted and successful. As Thompson et al. noted, the obvious flaw, of course, is that "acting as though work and family are separate spheres simply does not work for married women with jobs or careers, nor does it work for many married men" (p. 70). To avoid creating environments that are debilitating for women and increasingly for men, Thompson et al. suggested that organizations re-

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[7] Suggestions for family-friendly benefits usually include child care and elder care assistance and policies for making the workplace more flexible. Recommendations for child care assistance take the form of financial aid, resource/referral services, or employer-sponsored day care centers (Hewitt Associates, quoted in Barbieri, 1992a). Elder care service entails financial aid, counseling services, long-term care insurance, or employee-sponsored adult day care (Hewitt Associates, quoted in Barbieri, 1992a). Strides toward making the workplace less rigid are flex time, extended leaves, job sharing, telecommuting, quality part-time work, and phase-back-in programs for employees (Beck, 1991), and spouse relocation and job locator programs (Thompson et al., 1992).

examine the "norms that dictate the behaviors required to achieve 'success,' norms of expected commitment levels, and norms for 'appropriate' male and female behavior" (p. 76).

Few organizations, however, seem to be taking this step. Both Laskin (1990) and Hammonds (1991) reported that a small number of companies offer paternity leave, but few men take advantage because they know organizational rules demanding unmitigated commitment have not changed.

Kunde (1991, p. C1) also noted that "few employers smile when men take family leave" but asserted that slow change is happening (p. C1). She documented that some pace-setting companies such as DuPont, NCNB Corp., Arthur Andersen & Co., and Aetna Life and Casualty are moving forward by encouraging men to take family leave.

Still, a restructured workplace remains an elusive vision. A recent survey (cited in "Employees expect," 1991) by Priority Management Inc. found that, although employees expect to work less by the year 2000, this expectation probably will not be realized. Among those surveyed, this group found that today's workers are routinely putting in an average of 20 percent more hours than workers did a decade ago, they suffer more stress, they take less vacation time, and they log more hours on business travel. Moreover, survey results indicated that rising costs will limit organizations' ability to provide or expand benefits such as child care, elder care, and flexible work time.

Valuing the feminine. Another problem with the masculine ethic is the devaluation of the feminine inherent in this model. The result of this devaluation is occupational segregation that assigns women low-status jobs (see Kelly, 1991). Another problem is segregation within an occupation. That is, within any job, women may be relegated to duties that are not tied to advancement.

Public relations provides an illustrative example. Women may be confined to technical duties that do little to train them for management responsibilities and to demonstrate to others that they have the needed skills to advance.

Transforming this scenario requires a fundamental change in the value system within organizations so that women's experiences and contributions are heralded. This call for "valuing the feminine," however, is not without critics. For example, Fierman (1990) asserted that all of the "lavish new praise of women threatens to become a sea of fresh stereotypes" (pp. 115-116). As Sonnenfeld (quoted in Fierman, 1990) asserted, this new wave of feminism is "scary orthodoxy" because he believed this doctrine dictates that all women should act in certain ways.

Nevertheless, a bulk of research has demonstrated that in general women and men do approach their work and relationships at work differently (see, for example, Konner, 1990; Mann, 1986). Moreover, women's styles increasingly are posited as more efficacious for organizations of the 1990s and beyond (Doyle, 1990; Teegardin, 1991; Varadan, 1991).

Making recruiting, hiring and promotion criteria more objective. Another move that organizations should take involves making recruiting, hiring, and promotion criteria more objective.

The DOL's "Glass Ceiling Initiative" (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991) found that in some organizations, middle- and upper-level positions were filled outside of the formal recruitment process through word of mouth and informal networking. Obviously, these practices frustrate women's opportunities since women no doubt are less likely to be included in men's informal networking.

A related problem has to do with the informal mechanisms within organizations that determine who will be promoted. Since upper-level posts typically are inhabited by men, the similarity preference acts in concert with gender stereotypes to assure junior men will be mentored more than junior women.

One possible solution to this dilemma is formal mentoring programs for all employees. This strategy is imperfect, however, because the success of a mentor-protegee relationship usually depends on a matching of interpersonal factors that is impossible to dictate. Nevertheless, this approach may be better than no approach and might help some women.

Another answer might be formal job switching or job rotation programs that allow women to develop experience and expertise in management-oriented tasks. This strategy is most effective when women also are granted opportunities to demonstrate their expertise to those making decisions about promotions. Thus, women's inclusion in high visibility affairs is needed.

On Public Relations

Addressing the marginalization of the function and devising specific strategies for overcoming the problem. According to the women who participated in this study, the most fundamental problem within public relations is how to overcome others' misconceptions that impugn the field. An obvious first step is encouraging practitioners to pursue advanced degrees.

Along these lines, many of the women who participated in this research linked the status of public relations to practitioners' ability to show measurable results. This implies that practitioners must be proficient researchers. Few people, however, learn these skills without graduate education.

Related to practitioners' pursuing advanced degrees is encouraging practitioners to become accredited. First, there is the obvious benefit of increased knowledge afforded by studying for the accreditation exam. And, accreditation signals to others that individual practitioners are serious about their professionalism.

Beyond gains at the individual level, however, accreditation advances the professionalism of public relations in general. That is, the accreditation process demonstrates that public relations has "an intellectual tradition and a unique body of knowledge," one characteristic of a profession (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 66).

Another plan for elevating the status of public relations is publicizing IABC's "In Search of Excellence" study. This extensive research effort found that CEOs overwhelmingly value public relations. As the researchers noted, CEOs believe that public relations returns benefits to

organizations that equal about twice public relations' costs (J. Grunig, L. Grunig, and Dozier, 1990). In other words, public relations brings direct, measurable, positive effects to organizations' bottom line.

Scholars should use the findings from this study to further similar research. Practitioners should use these data within their organizations to make a case for the concrete effectiveness of public relations.

Still another scheme for combatting public relations' sagging stature is developing task forces within professional societies to address marginalization and posit solutions. These commissions specifically need to investigate the possible link between feminization and marginalization. Armed with this information, a fresh plan for rectifying problems, strengthened by associations' support, could be developed.

A problem within the public relations ranks, however, is reluctance to acknowledge and deal with gender issues (see, for example, Zoch and Russell, 1991). This hesitation has at least two roots.

One possible root is fear that acknowledging the problem will contribute to it, thus making sex discrimination a self-fulfilling prophecy. Some of the women who participated in this study seemed to hold this attitude; they advised that women should not assume discrimination exists.

This approach, however, is faulty because the weight of the evidence suggests that for women in public relations, discrimination does exist. A better strategy would be to acknowledge this. By doing so, women would empower themselves to look for discriminatory practices and devise strategies for vanquishing these biases (or, at the very least, maneuvering around them). Men's accepting this scenario possibly would make them more attuned to their role in breaking down the barriers.[8]

Another problem may be people's belief that insinuating feminization will impact public relations (either negatively or positively) is sexist. This sentiment is grounded no doubt in the fallacious notion that men and women are equal (or should be). Following the logic of "equality," people want to believe that the nature of public relations and its stature will not change simply because the sex of the majority of practitioners has changed (for examples of this sentiment, see Toth & Cline, 1991).

Again, though, evidence suggests that this belief is unsafe. As Conrad (1990) explained, when women become the majority of an occupation, or a division of an organization is more than half women, salaries plummet. Further, as women gain numbers within an occupation, a "splintering" may occur, whereby women are restricted to or choose the lower-paying, less desirable positions within the

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[8] This proposition, however, may be optimistic. A focus group of male practitioners, convened in 1990 by PRSA's Task Force on the Status of Women, spent most of the session disputing the existence of discrimination against female practitioners (see Toth & L. Grunig, 1991).

profession.

Reassessing the mission of undergraduate education. Another initiative within public relations should be reassessing the mission of undergraduate education. The women who participated in this study, many of whom went to top-ranked programs, were adamant on this point. For them, the undergraduate curriculum in public relations is critically deficient in preparing students for the realities of business.

Along these lines, few public relations textbooks emphasize managerial skills. Most concentrate on preparing students for the "nuts and bolts" of communications work. Although this training is necessary, it is not sufficient for preparing students to face the challenges of management.

Some college programs overcome this dilemma by having students minor in business or take electives in the business school. Students' minoring in business may work, but this approach does little to elevate the status of public relations on college campuses. This trend may even exacerbate marginalization if public relations is viewed as having to borrow too extensively from its neighbors. And, having students take business electives also can be an imperfect strategy because students may avoid the quantitative business courses they need in favor of "soft" options.[9]

Another argument is that aspiring practitioners should go to graduate school to pick up these skills. But, many graduate programs (even at the master's level) are increasingly focused on theory building research. Of course, theoretical knowledge and research skills are vital for public relations management, but so are accounting procedures. Getting an MBA is another option, but again this approach underscores many communications departments' weaknesses at training practitioners for management.

For these reasons, bringing management into the public relations curriculum (rather than vice versa) for undergraduates may be a more effectual approach. Undergraduate textbooks and curricula should provide students the analytical capacity and quantitative dexterity for understanding and performing critical business functions such as financial management and budgeting; organizing and staffing the communications department; planning; and measurement, just to name a few.

Incorporating women's perspectives into the curriculum. A related suggestion involves incorporating women's perspectives into the curriculum (see Jones, 1991). A first step is rewriting the history of public relations by acknowledging women's contributions.

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[9] However, DeTreville (quoted in Barbieri, 1991c) argued that the "softer" aspects of business increasingly may be more efficacious (p. E5). As she predicted, external demands on organizations will elevate the status of managers responsible for meeting the needs of consumers and the community. Thus, future leaders are more likely to hail from marketing than finance.

Creedon (1989b) found in her review of public relations textbooks that women's role in public relations history was not represented adequately. As she explained, women were for the most part absent from the story. And, when women were noted, usually they were cited in the context of being someone's wife (e.g., Doris Fleischman) with little mention of these women's own contributions.

Creedon went on to point out that textbooks have tried to overcome this problem by tagging on a list of women notables to history chapters. But, for her, this listing does little to uncover women's stories because these "worthy" women attained success by assimilating into the dominant power structure (i.e., male). Thus, the resulting portrait is not herstory but still history. The solution for writing a more inclusive account of public relations history involves uncovering and recovering a variety of women's perspectives and transforming the current historical register to include these (see Keohane, 1986).

A related mission has to do with reworking the biased portrayals of women in public relations textbooks. Looking at this problem, Kern-Foxworth (1989) discovered that the number of references to women in textbooks was limited. Of the 3,447 pages she analyzed, only 38 had references to women.

A bigger problem, however, was the poor quality of references to women. Kern-Foxworth found that most of the texts only focused on the increased number of women in the profession and the gender-salary connection. And, she found that profiles of women were limited in number and superficial in content.

For Kern-Foxworth, biases toward women in textbooks could be erased in part by journalism schools' hiring more female faculty to teach public relations (see Russell & Schaible, 1989; Sharp, Turk, Einsiedel, Schmaber, & Hollenback, 1985; Stuart, 1989; Toth 1984; Zoch & Russell, 1991). These women might begin to write and edit public relations texts that accurately reflect women's contributions to public relations. Further, these female professors can provide the positive role models for women that current public relations texts do not.

On Women

At the next level are strategies women themselves can use for overcoming discrimination. These recommendations, however, do not imply that women are deficient. Nor should it be insinuated that, through their own efforts, individual women can hurdle all of the systemic obstacles. As Kleiman (1992) pointed out, even women's having "all the right stuff" is not enough to overcome institutional barriers (p. C1). Given this, society, organizations, and public relations must move to erase the global impediments that stymie women.

Institutional change, however, is usually slow. Thus, women need strategies they can use now for empowering themselves to battle discrimination.

Monitoring behavior. One strategy for women suggested by several of the women in this study

is monitoring behavior. Some of these women referred to this as "impression management."

For Leong, Snodgrass, and Gardner (1992), effective impression management for women involves women's avoiding the stereotypical feminine image of frailty and dependence. Women can do this by avoiding ingratiation, exemplification, and supplication.

Discussing ingratiation, Leong et al. noted that both women and men use this technique for getting other people to like them. But, for women, this strategy can be risky. Apparently women's using limited methods of ingratiation (such as smiling, eye contact, and friendly posture) is acceptable. But, women's using "too much of a good thing" results in backlash from others (especially from men) who perceive these women as manipulative (Baron, quoted in Leong et al., 1992, p. 199).

Leong et al. next posited that exemplification refers to women's falling into nurturing and abiding by the will of men. For example, women with a tendency toward this behavior may display selfless devotion to male bosses. Although these women garner gratitude and admiration, their exemplifying behavior is likely to reduce their chances for advancement.

Leong et al. also discussed women's propensity for supplication. As they pointed out, women rarely are in organizational positions that allow them to get their way through intimidation. Thus, women sometimes fall back on supplication, or creating the perception of helplessness. But, Leong et al. stressed that this behavior undermines women's efforts to advance because supplicators are perceived as lacking in the attributes needed for higher-level jobs.

Creating a "persona" of promotability. Also discussing impression management for women, Conrad (1990) pointed out the need for women to create a persona of promotability. That is, women can begin to surmount gender prejudices by convincing others that they possess the characteristics managers should have. To do so, women must demonstrate the requirement of loyalty and manage the visibility paradox.

Discussing the requirement of loyalty, Conrad explained that the unwritten rules of most organizations mandate that professionals consider work their highest priority. Loyalty, however, is a symbolic creation. Thus, employees must use symbolism to convince power holders that they meet the requirement for loyalty.

For Conrad, women can create this perception by staying with one firm for a long time. Women also should actively seek promotions involving relocation and assignments that include travel.

However, as Conrad pointed out, these strategies depend on women's ability (or desire) to negotiate a personal life that affords them these options. On this point, women may be gaining ground. As Kleiman (1991b) noted, some men increasingly are accommodating their wife's career even when the man is the highest wage earner.

Last, Conrad stressed managing visibility as a strategy for creating a persona of promotability. He explained that competence and skilled performance only lead to rewards if these characteristics are

visible to organizational power holders.

Conrad further suggested that women can foster visibility by finding a mentor (see Edson, 1980). That is, mentors can provide protegees visibility by placing them in settings to which protegees do not have access on their own.

The mentor-protegee relationship, however, can be problematic if others perceive the protegee as too dependent on the mentor (Conrad, 1990). For this reason, building a coalition of supporters should not be overlooked. That is, having several supporters helps counter the perception of protegees' relying too heavily on one person. This strategy also widens one's circle of contacts.

Conrad believed that this "networking" approach, whereby a group of supporters is developed, was an especially effective for women. As he explained, through this network, women have access to the same information men traditionally have gained via the "good old boy" clique (p. 340, see also Barbieri, 1991b). This pipeline helps women decide whether "the risks they take are reasonable, learn when to pull out of an unsuccessful project before it becomes a public failure, and develop strategies for making their success known and accepted" (Conrad, 1990, p. 340).

Joining professional associations. Networking brings up the suggestion of women's joining professional associations. Professional societies helped many of the women who participated in this study by providing opportunities for career development, contacts, and information.

Activities such as chairing committees, organizing events, and making presentations can provide women the requisite management skills and experience that they may not have a chance to develop at work. Moreover, successfully accomplishing these endeavors can help build women's self-confidence.

Networking with peers also might provide women a better perspective for salary negotiations. Getting to know peers and staying in touch with them are effective tactics for gaining a sense of what the market will bear.

Helping other women. Still another strategy involves women's helping one another. Novek (1991) noted that "feminist theory has long emphasized the special enabling qualities of connectedness for women" (p. 2).

Novek (1991) documented how women's rallying together in groups can produce social change. And, in doing so, "women forge new social bonds, develop new abilities, learn to respect skills they already possess, and test their capacities for leadership and confrontation" (p. 10). For Novek, this process is the essence of empowerment.

Becoming the boss. A final strategy women have at their disposal is becoming their own boss (for a discussion of women in public relations who have chosen this route, see Humphrey, 1990). Several of the women who participated in this study believed that, for them, taking this step was the ultimate form of empowerment.

Along these lines, Moore, Buttner, and Rosen (1992) explained women have selected "the entrepreneurial alternative" for several reasons (p. 85). They include frustration over the glass ceiling, disenchantment with corporate politics, and a desire for autonomy.

Women's owning their own business also helps them avoid the mommy track (Matthews, 1991) and gives women more control in trying to manage work and family simultaneously (Barbieri, 1991a). As Vernon (quoted in Barbieri, 1991a) explained: "A lot of women who are forming organizations are doing it so they can have more flexible time. That doesn't mean they're working less; that means they're working more effectively" (p. E5).

The entrepreneurial alternative is not for everyone, though. As Grogan (quoted in Barbieri, 1991a) pointed out, "Running a business requires an ability to solve problems, a willingness to take risks,". . .[and] "a burning desire to be one's own boss" (p. E5). Further, this venture can be lonely, the days can be long, and sometimes the cash flow is inconsistent (Barbieri, 1991a).

Still more problems for female business owners have to do with the disparate treatment they receive from government and banks. As Moore et al. (1992) pointed out, female entrepreneurs still experience discrimination in Social Security benefits disbursement and taxation of annuities and business income. Women also face sexism in banks' processing of credit applications. As Moore et al. concluded, "Equality of entrepreneurial opportunity based on sex remains a distant goal" (p. 104).

Despite these handicaps, women's opting for the entrepreneurial track no doubt will continue. As Matthews (1991) documented, women in the workforce are starting companies at three times the rate of men.

Implications

Coming to the close of this feminist theory of public relations turns attention toward assessing this study's implications. Scholars, practitioners, students, and educators should benefit from this project.

Scholars. The theoretical perspective cultivated here provides scholars with a useful guide for conceptualizing future research--research that is beneficial to female communicators, and, thus, public relations. Rose (1988) pointed out how feminist scholarship moves so strikingly beyond standard erudition. Feminism makes this move by transcending dichotomies; insisting on the scientific validity of the subjective; and emphasizing holism, harmony, and complexity.

This feminist theory of public relations replaces simplistic (dichotomous) explanations of women's subjugation by providing "truly inclusive description" (Spitzack & Carter, 1987, p. 401). Feminism's inclusiveness is grounded in its bringing "into existence phenomena and experiences hitherto denied space" (Rose, 1988, p. 58).

This feminist theory legitimizes the subjective by showcasing the experiential knowledge that the women who participated in this study have garnered. That is, "arrogant objectivising science that

seeks to instruct women" (Rose, 1988, p. 70) is displaced by science that validates women's rich and varied experiences.

Feminist scholarship embraces holism by contextualizing or understanding phenomena in relation to other aspects of the situation (Agar, 1980). That is, this feminist theorizing sees "parts as wholes" and tries "to grasp the broader contexts and frameworks within which people behave and experience" (Peacock, 1986, p. 17). This holism enriches the analysis of gender discrimination in public relations by underscoring the union between women's subjugated positions and the systems, or context, that root inequities in place.

Feminism's call for harmony produces public relations theory that presupposes unifying solutions for effecting equity for women. Moving beyond women's assimilation into patriarchal systems to a genuine commitment to social restructuring launches communication theory forward by providing the opportunity for meaningful transformations.

Similarly, this feminist theory incorporates complexity by addressing the intermingling of institutional bases for discrimination against women in public relations. This assumption of an intricate "bigger picture" displaces dense explanations. Moreover, this perspective charges scholars to elaborate renderings of women's experiences and expand solutions for defeating repression.

Perhaps most important, though, the agenda for social change outlined here provides scholars with research areas that need cultivating. What role can scholars play in helping to eliminate sexism at the societal and organizational levels? Closer to home, how can public relations be improved so that female practitioners will not be denigrated? And, how can scholars help women empower themselves to overcome discrimination?

All of these are important questions in public relations. The present and future vitality of the field rests on finding the answers.

The methodological approach taken here also suggests important implications for scholars. This study's methodology provides a valuable option to the confines of conventional science. Methodologies like this one also help dethrone overused survey techniques within public relations research (see Pavlik, 1987). And, the rich data acquired through interviewing usurp the insipid knowledge that characterizes much of the current scholarship about gender issues in public relations. This empowering methodological alternative no doubt will become increasingly operative as more researchers break away from traditional limits.

Practitioners. The feminist research conducted here also insinuates striking implications for practitioners. By celebrating and validating the feminine, an "unquestionably new and qualitatively different" (Rose, 1988, p. 73) knowledge about gender discrimination in public relations is created. Female practitioners no doubt will recognize and welcome this knowledge. This new consciousness, however, will not be lost on men who are interested in advancing equity within public relations.

Raising the consciousness of individual practitioners is an important but insufficient step. The institutional roots of women's devaluation must be identified and vanquished before public relations is valued and female practitioners are treated equitably.

Thus, for practitioners, the most significant ramification of this project lies in its attempt to confront this Herculean task and pose an agenda for change. No single endeavor, of course, could provide all the answers. But, the insights revealed here and the suggestions put forth are a meaningful starting point.

Students. Feminist scholarship has important implications for students since the "new majority" needs an alternative to the patriarchal curriculum and classroom climate that prevail ("Feminists to bring broader perspective," 1988; L. Grunig, 1989). Too often, this environment translates into women's feeling that what they are learning does not speak to their lives. The consequence is further devaluation for women.

One avenue for getting beyond this disjuncture involves generating scholarship about women that is based on the experiences of female practitioners. Taking this new scholarship to the classroom benefits students because it challenges sexist assumptions while emphasizing the validity of women's experiences.

Educators. Lastly, educators need the knowledge that this feminist theory of public relations can bring to their teaching. Dozier (1988a) has pointed out that teaching public relations has come to mean teaching women. Given this, what do educators tell their female students?

The answer lies, at least in part, in preparing women for the challenges and opportunities they will face as practitioners. This feminist theory can help instructors lay this groundwork by providing a rich understanding of the barriers facing women and the potential for change that lies untapped. By sharing this information with students, educators would be delivering a generation of empowered practitioners who could bring public relations closer to the profession it can and should be.

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A SYSTEMATIC LOOK AT SPECIAL EVENTS MARKETING:

OBJECTIVES, EVALUATION, AND EFFECTIVENESS

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Addressing fast trackers in Northwestern's Kellogg graduate management program for executives, a top Leo Burnett exec said event marketing will become the favored medium of the 21st century. He sees shifting demographics, such as more people living alone, fueling interest and participation in festivals and events. He says celebratory environments will offer the most meaningful opportunities for communicating with customers.[1]

. . . special events will be a major catalyst in altering irrevocably the relationship between the public and private sectors.[2]

INTRODUCTION

In their never-ending search to find more effective ways to reach consumers, companies have increasingly embraced a form of promotion known as event marketing. They spent $7 billion on event marketing worldwide in 1991. North American companies alone are expected to spend $3.3 billion in 1992, a 16 percent increase over 1991 levels.[3]

The term event marketing suggests promotional activities centered around special events. But as commonly defined by those within the industry, event marketing encompasses a number of activities. International Events Group, an organization that collects and disseminates information on event marketing, identifies five categories: sports; pop music and entertainment tours; festivals, fairs, and annual events; arts; and cause marketing.[4] Businesses can participate in those activities in wide variety of ways ranging from casual, non-exclusive association to outright ownership.

The most common form of event marketing is sponsorship. A company pays a fee to another organization in exchange for certain privileges which may include the

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1 Ukman (1992), p. 2.
2 Stevens (1984), p. 30.
3 "Sponsorship Spending" (1991), p. 1.
4 Ibid.

display of the company's name and/or logo at the organization's event, the right to sell the company's product at the event, the right to use the event's name in the company's advertising, and special entertainment arrangements and/or access to event participants.

Companies do not limit themselves to sponsorship, however. In some cases event marketing specialists create events entirely owned by and for the benefit of their companies; in other cases companies use cause marketing, which often does not involve an "event" at all. Examples of the first would include the Aloe Up National Snowboard Championship (a competition produced by a sun-care product company) and the Sta-bil National Lawn Mower Racing Championship (an event created by a company which makes a fuel stabilizer commonly used in lawn mower motors). Examples of the second would include Colgate-Palmolive's offer to give five cents to the Starlight Foundation for each coupon redeemed and Reebok's offer to plant a tree for any person who returns a form from one of Reebok's specially marked shoe boxes.

In reality, event marketing is not new at all. Pillsbury has been running a bake-off for 43 years. Budweiser has been showing off its Clydesdales in parades since 1933.

Event marketing is a new term for an old concept. What has changed is the perception that now this a full-fledged marketing tool, not just a promotional device. As a result, it has attracted considerable attention and funding from companies. It has not, however, been well-covered in the academic press.

In an effort to encourage more study of event marketing, I want to examine (1) event marketing objectives, (2) event marketing evaluation, and (3) event marketing effectiveness when compared to other marketing communication vehicles.

EVENT MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Event marketing is perhaps the most complex of all marketing communication vehicles. Not only does it often employ multiple channels and multiple messages, (e.g., a company may sponsor a sporting event hoping to reach not only participants and attendees, but also those watching the event on television, those covering the event for the media, and those in the trade making business decisions), but it is often used to accomplish a wide variety of objectives. The few studies done on event marketing confirm this:

One, conducted in 1980 with British firms sponsoring cultural events, indicated that 40 percent sought publicity, 30 percent saw it as an extension of advertising, 30 percent considered it a matter of social responsibility, and 20 percent did so because the chairman was interested.[5]

A second, an unpublished 1982 study of British firms engaged in sponsorship, indicated that 25 percent did so because they were asked by organizations or individuals; 20.8 percent to develop or maintain an image; 12.5 percent to promote community relationships; 12.5 percent as a public relations move; 8.3 percent as a charitable act; 8.3 percent because management wanted to; 4.2 percent to "go across the full spectrum of media activities"; and 4.2 percent to "get feedback from consumers."[6]

Yet another study, this time among 78 Fortune 500 firms, indicated that 24 percent were involved in sponsorship to promote community relations, 20 percent to increase awareness, 15 percent to increase image, and 15 percent as a matter of corporate responsibility.[7]

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5 Meenaghan (1983), p. 26.

6 Ibid.

7 Gardner and Shuman (1987), p. 13.

More recently, companies are being asked what they want from events rather than what their objectives are. But a wide variety of marketing objectives are still mentioned. For example, when 75 Canadian companies were asked what they most wanted from an event, their primary concern was exclusivity, not a marketing objective. But the second most important criterion to them was the event's ability to increase awareness. Then, in descending order, were the following criteria: the event's ability to "reinforce image, deliver signage [the display of a company, product, or brand name or logo during the event], target spectators and increase sales or trial."[8] Interestingly, the criteria given for evaluating an event after the fact suggest somewhat different objectives. Sixty-two percent of the companies were concerned with media exposure, 46 percent with sales, and 26 percent with dealer/trade involvement.

In another survey of approximately 450 companies[9], respondents were asked what they considered important or very important when deciding whether or not to renew a sponsorship. Most criteria involved marketing communication objectives, though the top two did not. The first was "whether a property delivers on its basic contractual obligations." (97.4 percent)[10] The second was the sponsorship fee (91.8 percent). Then, in descending order were: the amount of media coverage of the event (90.9 percent); the amount of media coverage of the sponsor (90.4 percent); treatment by the event promoter (86.6 percent); the amount of signage (85.6 percent); total attendance (84.2 percent); audience's demographic composition (82.6 percent); the type of media (80.9 percent); increased sales (80.4 percent); types of other sponsors (72.6 percent); feedback from guests/employees (70.8 percent); the ability to entertain guests (55.9 percent); access to retail (51.4 percent); on-site sampling (47.2 percent); cross-promotion opportunities (46 percent); the audience's cultural/ethnic composition

8 "Survey Reveals What Sponsors Want," p. 6.

9 Conducted by Mike Wilson, special events manager of the California Lottery.

10 "Why Does a Sponsor Renew?", p. 4.

(37.5 percent); on-site sales (37.4 percent); and the opportunity to entertain employees (26 percent).[11]

One interesting trend worth mentioning here is that the more recent the study, the longer the list of event marketing objectives or criteria. This phenomenon probably reflects both the increased familiarity companies have with event marketing and the increased complexity of the questions researchers are asking about the subject.

EVENT MARKETING EVALUATION

The hot topic among event marketing professionals is evaluation. Over the last few years several consulting firms have attempted to offer clients ways to judge the success of their event marketing efforts. Yet anecdotal material in trade publications plus results from a few studies indicate that companies still know very little about how to measure the effectiveness of event marketing:

> I can't show a cause and effect. I know from market research that our tennis program has enhanced and increased awareness of Volvo. But how that translates into more business is anybody's guess.[12] (Bjorn Ahlstrom, president and chief executive of Volvo North America.)

> You can't tally up everything on Monday morning and ask if participation in a sports event was successful.[13] (Steven Cross, corporate event manager at AT&T.)

> I have yet to see a scientific formula definitely showing sales results from a sports promotion. A lot of it is gut feel.[14] (John Beck, pro sports marketing manager at Miller Brewing.)

> To be honest, we don't market-research any of our event promotions. We evaluate it from the gut, but that's an instinct that has been refined over 20

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11 Ibid., p. 5.

12 Trachtenberg (1989), B1.

13 Meyers (1990), p. 4.

14 Ibid.

years.[15] (Cathy L. Leiber, director of promotion for Philip Morris.)

At this stage of our development, we don't have rhyme or reason to our sponsorships.[16] (Carl Gilman, vice president of sales and marketing at Snapple Natural Beverage Co.)

A study, conducted in 1978 among British firms, indicated that 28 percent offered no response when asked to state their sponsorship objectives and only 30 percent identified a target audience. In terms of measurement, 27 percent based their evaluations on media coverage,15 percent depended on "seat of the pants" evaluations, and another 15 percent used no evaluation methods at all.[17]

Meenaghan (1983) points out the tie between lack of specific objectives and the inability to measure effectiveness. "A tendency to state objectives in the broadest terms without either the intention to adhere to strict theoretical requirements or to employ a mechanism to achieve the evaluation of results typifies the approach of even the large companies."[18]

When companies do not have identifiable objectives, by definition they are unable to know if they've reached them. Further, according to Meenaghan, "Even where there is a consciousness of the need to set objectives many companies fail to exhibit an equal awareness of the need for evaluation or of the means to undertake it."[19]

A more recent study, that of the 78 Fortune 500 companies, indicated that 47 percent did not measure sponsorship outcomes, 19 percent used market share or sales data, and 17 percent used audience research.[20] Yet another study of 54 United

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15 Hampton (1988), p. 86.
16 "As Popularity of 'New Age' " (1992), p. 2.
17 Meenaghan (1983), p. 64.
18 Ibid., p. 27.
19 Ibid., p. 47.
20 Gardner and Shuman (1987).

Kingdom companies conducted in 1988 indicated that a third of them "used no method at all to evaluate effectiveness."[21]

This complacency is starting to change as economic conditions are pushing more companies to eliminate questionable expenses. Companies are now asking for evidence of event marketing's effectiveness. The above-mentioned 1992 study of approximately 450 companies indicated that "84 percent of respondents said they conduct post-event evaluations" and that three-fourths "expect [event] organizers to deliver a post-event analysis that outlines tangible benefits."[22]

Yet there is reason to believe that even though managers want to see proof that event marketing works, they may not get it. The same evaluation problems which plague more traditional marketing communication techniques often apply to event marketing as well.

> It is difficult, expensive, and sometimes impossible to evaluate the mass communications tools of advertising and publicity on the basis of sales results. Variables such as economic conditions, price changes, marketing channel variations, political environment, and the like all combine to affect the sales of a product, and it is most difficult and expensive to try to isolate, from this complex combination of marketing and nonmarketing factors, the effect of any one of these variables on sales. Furthermore, there is often a time lag between the appearance of an advertising or publicity message and final purchasing action.
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> Many promotion authorities have come to the conclusion that, because the role of advertising and publicity is to communicate, communications goals, not sales goals, are the only reasonable standards against which advertising and publicity programs can be measured.[23]

These communication goals might include exposure, reception, cognitive response, attitude, intention, and behavior[24] (in other words, a variation of the hierarchy-of-effects model so popular in mass communication research). However, the link between reaching these goals and achieving effective marketing

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21 Witcher, et. al. (1991), p. 19.

22 "Why Does A Sponsor Renew?", p. 4.

23 Stanley (1982), p. 100.

24 Kotler (1991), p. 573.

communication is debatable. Meenaghan (1983) suggests that these benchmarks are used not so much because they indicate message effectiveness, but because they lend themselves to measurement.[25] Further, even the value of their measurement is often suspect. Stewart (1989) points out that unless one knows about preexisting conditions in both the marketplace and in the subject, measurement results cannot be accurately interpreted.

It would appear, then, whether or not a particular technique measures effective marketing communication is largely in the eyes of the beholder. Given the importance of *usable* measurements to marketing managers, this paper will focus as much as possible on commonly accepted measurement techniques used in business rather than academia.[26] As Stewart, et. al. (1985), have pointed out, "Reliability and validity of measures has been a fundamental concern of industry researchers, while academic researchers have tended to ignore these problems."[27] Further, in recognition of business priorities, this paper will, whenever possible, also look at the extent to which specific event marketing objectives can be counted on to produce measurable increases in sales.

EVENT MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS

At issue with event marketing is not only whether or not it is effective, but whether or not it is cost-effective. In other words, most companies want to know not only if event marketing works, but also if it works better (i.e., is a more efficient or cheaper form of marketing communication) than what they are currently using.

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25 See Gronhaug, et. al. (1991) for a similar discussion.

26 See Stewart, et. al. (1985) for a discussion about the isolation of advertising effectiveness research from real world conditions.

27 Stewart, et. al. (1985), p. 4.

Therefore, event marketing can be judged effective if it either (1) facilitates marketing communication as well as or better than other methods or (2) opens up entirely new avenues to marketing communication.

Previous research has suggested that event marketing is being used primarily as a variation of one or more traditional marketing communication vehicles. That is, most event marketing objectives appear to fall into one of the following categories: sales, promotion, public relations, and advertising. Each category has generated its own set of measurement and evaluation techniques, all of which can be applied to corresponding event marketing objectives.

Sales activities (i.e., those which result in immediate sales, generate leads, or trigger product trial) are the easiest form of marketing communication to evaluate because results are generally measured in actual sales or traceable sales.

Promotion activities (i.e., tactics which encourage consumers to visit retail outlets or dealerships and/or generate enthusiasm on the part of the trade) are somewhat more difficult to evaluate because they are often not isolated from other marketing efforts. However, the use of scanners to track sales is allowing both retail outlets and manufacturers to better gauge the effectiveness of promotions.

Public relations activity (i.e., promoting a company, brand, or product through non-paid media coverage) is relatively easy to monitor, but sometimes hard to evaluate. Results are often quantified by counting both numbers and length of stories and by gauging their reach and frequency. But this really only indicates the extent of the impact on the media, not necessarily on consumers. Few companies evaluate the effectiveness of public relations to reach consumers in a meaningful way. At best, they may conduct surveys asking consumers about their attitudes concerning the company, but this may be a poor indicator of purchasing behavior.[28]

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[28] See Stewart, et. al. (1985), p. 4, for a discussion of the problems of using "attitudinal or intentional measures as surrogates for choice behavior."

Finally, advertising is the most problematic of all marketing communication tactics. It is both difficult to evaluate and difficult to prove effective. Advertisers are rarely sure if their messages have been received, if they have been perceived correctly, and if they have produced any positive effect. Advertisers must depend on either constant research (which is usually too expensive to conduct) or reports of sales activity (which may or may not reflect the impact of the advertising) to gauge effectiveness.

Event marketing can be evaluated by the same methods and to the same degree as sales, promotion, public relations, and advertising are. Consequently, proof of event marketing effectiveness will be only as conclusive as those methods allow. As long as objectives do not extend beyond these traditional forms of marketing communication, measurement is not likely to yield significantly different results than companies are currently able to achieve.

It is possible, however, that event marketing offers a different kind of communication which is processed by the consumer differently and can be measured differently. "Though there is little research evidence on the subject, one suspects that sponsorship may be seen as 'something different' by both recipients and sponsors when compared with the more traditional methods of marketing communications and in particular advertising . . ." [29]

Event marketing may, in fact, be far more effective than other forms of marketing communication, but we have not yet learned to measure it or even what to look for. Perhaps once we understand what event marketing currently is and is not, we can begin to direct our attention to what it can be.

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[29] Meenaghan (1991b), p. 9.

THE STUDY

Effectiveness cannot be evaluated unless message objectives are known. Therefore, event marketing cannot be evaluated as an effective marketing tool unless specific objectives are delineated. As event marketing continues to evolve, the list of objectives seems to grow longer and more complex.

In order to gain some sense of the current scope of event marketing, I decided to catalog all the marketing objectives given by a representative group of companies sponsoring special events. The best single source of information on event marketing is *International Event Group Newsletter* (formerly called *Special Events Newsletter*). A biweekly publication, it has been reporting on the subject since 1981. I had access to approximately two years' worth of issues (May 1 and May 15, 1989 and from January 15, 1990 through November 16, 1992 , minus several issues). Each issue contains reports on from five to ten events being staged around the country by a wide range of companies.

I found 280 different listings which contained enough information to identify corporate objectives. A listing consisted of a discussion of one company's involvement in an event where at least one corporate marketing objective was mentioned in addition to the use of the company's name on or in event promotional materials and/or displays. (Any company not interested in the use of its name or logo in conjunction with an event is more likely to be making a charitable donation, which is usually funded from a special corporate philanthropy budget, and therefore is not covered in this paper.)

In all, twenty different types of objectives were mentioned, with most companies identifying at least three or four. While it is by no means a comprehensive catalog of all special events, it is representative enough to establish a baseline when discussing

corporate goals.

RESULTS

The primary purpose for event marketing is to have a product, brand or company name associated with the event. Therefore, it is a given that virtually all companies want corporate identification (display of the corporate or brand name or logo on signs, buildings or equipment, programs, uniforms, and/or event promotional materials) in conjunction with the event they are staging or sponsoring. As a result, this is an objective involving all 280 events. (See Chart 1.)

Target marketing comes in second, having been mentioned as an objective for 54 percent of the events. Third was promotional value (the use of the event as a theme in order to gain attention from the trade and to drive consumers into stores and dealerships). It was mentioned as an objective 49 percent of the time.

The use of events as a place or way to entertain clients was mentioned in 29 percent of the cases. The use of the event as a place to offer product samples or coupons was mentioned 26 percent of the time. (Couponing and sampling were treated as one category because both are devices to encourage trial. Often coupons are given out when a product does not lend itself to sampling.) Use of the event as a way to create awareness of the product, brand, or company on the part of consumers was mentioned as an objective 24 percent of the time. The use of the event to improve, enhance, or change a company's or product's image was given as a reason for 22 percent of the events. Use of the event to encourage purchase of the product (e.g., buy two items to get a free ticket to the event) or usage of the product (e.g., American Express will donate twenty-five cents to the local symphony every time you use your American Express card) was given for 18 percent of the events.

Public relations value (the newsworthiness of the event and/or the sponsorship) was mentioned 16 percent of the time. The use of the event as a theme for consumer contests and sweepstakes was mentioned in 15 percent of the cases. The use of event-connected athletes or celebrities for corporate appearances was mentioned 13 percent of the time. (Celebrities and participants are valued either as a way to impress or entertain corporate guests or because their presence implies that they are endorsing the sponsoring company's products.) The event as a place to demonstrate or display products was mentioned 12 percent of the time and as a place to sell a product or generate leads, also 12 percent.

The use of the event for the benefit of employees (e.g., a morale builder, production incentive, or entertainment vehicle) and as a community relationship builder were both cited 8 percent of the time. The use of the event as a way to generate mailing lists and databases was mentioned 7 percent of the time. Fostering business-to-business relationships was mentioned 6 percent of the time.

The use of events as a way to reach top executives of other companies was mentioned 3 percent of the time. Two companies (one percent of the events) mentioned using an event as a recruiting tool. And in one case (amounting to less than one percent of the events), a company said it was using a cause-marketing effort as a way to maintain a relationship with consumers. (The company felt it would further consumer "involvement".)

DISCUSSION

As expected, most of the twenty objectives listed above fall within the four major marketing communications vehicles: sales (on-site sales, entertainment, demonstrations and displays, mailing lists, business-to-business contacts, and

sampling and couponing[30]), promotion (promotional tie-ins, usage, and contests), public relations, and advertising (ID, target marketing, awareness, image, and athlete and celebrity tie-ins).

Five other objectives (reaching other executives, improving community relationships, increasing employee morale, enhancing recruiting, and increasing consumer involvement) are goodwill measures which are farther removed from marketing and will not be discussed in this paper.

SALES. When an event marketing objective falls within this category, effectiveness can easily be evaluated. For example, an event can be deemed effective if the number of items actually sold there reaches or exceeds a predetermined target. This is especially the case if the profit made on those items covers or surpasses the cost of the company's involvement in the event, in which case it can be considered a self-liquidating promotion. With some events and with some products, this can happen. Special events can often move considerable amounts of food and beverage products, personal care products (e.g., sunblock and perfume), entertainment items (e.g., cassettes and CDs), and clothing (e.g., T-shirts and baseball caps).

One study found that nearly 70 percent of the respondents (chosen from people who had attended either a college basketball or college football game) correctly remembered stadium advertising and said that 33 percent of what they purchased at the game was attributable to that advertising. " . . . the researchers conclude that the use of stadium advertising should be strongly considered by companies whose products are used in conjunction with sporting events, such as fast food, soft drinks,

30 Sampling and couponing are traditionally considered promotional devices. However, for the purpose of this discussion, they will be included with sales efforts because they generate contact with potential customers and trigger direct involvement with the product, which are two tactics often employed in personal sales.

beer, cigarettes, and radio/TV/newspapers."[31]

Many companies involved in event marketing, however, do not offer products which lend themselves to this kind of direct selling. Often the products are either too expensive to be sold in great quantities at an event (e.g., cars or computers) or too mundane to warrant purchase at an event (e.g., laundry products or motor oil). Still, there are other methods which might suggest, if not prove, a link between an event and sales.

Special events, for example, are often used as sampling opportunities. Therefore, effectiveness is often defined by the number of samples given out. This, in turn, can be compared to other sampling vehicles to see which is more cost-effective. Special events are also often used as places to display and demonstrate products. In this case attendance figures are often used as a indication of an event's value as a marketing tool. In addition, both sampling and displays can be combined with specially marked coupons. Then redemption rates can be measured and compared in order to identify which events generate the most consumer response.

Burroughs Wellcome Company, for example, sponsors tennis to promote sunscreen. Coupons have been given out at the events and then later redeemed at rates three to four times higher than average. "Sponsoring women's tennis allows us to break through the coupon clutter,"[32] according to the assistant product manager.

Special events can also be linked to sales through address cards. Attendees are encouraged to sign up for product information and often for free prizes or special gifts. In return, the company receives a list of potential customers, who, by attending the event and filling out the cards, have displayed some interest in the company's product. "We evaluate each event by the number of leads it produces," says the manager of domestic marketing for Emergency Networks, Inc., a home security system

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[31] Stotlar and Johnson (1989), p. 101.

[32] "Burroughs Wellcome" (1990), p. 6.

maker.[33] Humana Inc., a hospital chain, generated 10,000 leads for its Medicare supplement through a "Spin and Win" booth at regional festivals. "It worked out to be a lower cost-per-lead than either advertising or telemarketing,"[34] according to the president of the marketing services agency managing the program.

Sales may also result when special events are used as a way to entertain clients. One study "found that 55 per cent of respondents agreed that sponsorship provided a cost-effective method of rewarding customers and 18 per cent of respondents suggested guest hospitality as the main objective of their sponsorship involvement."[35] Another study found "that 75 per cent of respondents had as one of their objectives the entertainment of invited guests."[36] Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Co. sponsors the World Professional Squash Association because, "The sponsorships give our agents something to talk about with clients."[37]

Few companies, however, appear to directly measure the link between entertainment and future sales. Many businesses indicate that they do not attempt to do business during these occasions, preferring instead to simply generate an aura of goodwill. "The prime purpose of investing in all business entertainment is to retain and strengthen customer bonds, not to buy business, and usually not to develop new business. Entertainment costs are like insurance costs: They are incurred to prevent loss."[38]

One study indicated that such goodwill efforts may not be effective. Its research showed that while business gifts seem to increase "positive customer perceptions toward key product attributes," this does not mean the recipient will be motivated to

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33 "Emergency Networks" (1991), p. 1.
34 "Festivals Deliver" (1990), p. 1.
35 Meenaghan (1983), p. 24.
36 Ibid.
37 "Mutual Benefits" (1989), p. 6.
38 Falvey (1989), p. 100.

contact a salesman. "Perhaps reciprocity manifests itself at the behavioral level, therefore, less in returning more business to the giver than in giving [the recipient] pause when deciding to continue doing business with a competitor . . ."[39]

A common way to evaluate the effect of special events and hospitality functions on sales is to survey company salesmen afterward. "A spokesman for Prudential Insurance explains, 'we evaluate the results of each event by a detailed questionnaire sent to the sales force asking whether they found life easier after the event than before.'"[40] Similarly, Xerox asks its managers to fill out reports three, six, and nine months after an event "estimating what effect the occasion had on a client's orders."[41]

Finally, special events have sometimes been held at retail locations in order to attract people who might also shop while they are there. Again, the effectiveness of these events can be measured by comparing customer traffic levels and sales volume during and immediately preceding and following a special event to normal traffic levels and sales volume.

At least one study has shown, however, that overall the connection between sales and special events may be weak. The researcher "found that 46 per cent of respondents felt that sponsorship had not resulted in a sales increase, 42 per cent felt that sponsorship had increased sales while 12 per cent did not know, but only one company could offer tangible proof of a sales increase attributable to sponsorship."[42]

On the subject of linking sales and special events, the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers has pointed out that although "Sponsorship can create a climate conducive to the development of extra sales; only very rarely is it the direct means of achieving them."[43]

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39 Beltramini (1992), p. 100.
40 Meenaghan (1983), p. 61.
41 McCarthy (1991), p. B1.
42 Ibid., p. 51.
43 Whitely (1982), p. 7.

PROMOTION. Many companies using event marketing stress the promotional value of these efforts. Consider, for example, the reason a sales manager for Nestle Foods Corp. gave for event marketing: "Very little innovation in promotions takes place in the dairy industry. We felt an event tie would generate more shelf space [for our ice cream bars] than traditional trade marketing efforts."[44]

Although sales promotions originally began as a way to offer something extra to consumers, now they are often used to enhance trade relationships. Keeping the trade happy seems to be a major concern for many consumer products manufacturers and this concern may be justified. According to Verbeke, the primary guarantee of product success is distribution: Shelf space is king. "To reach the consumer, the manufacturer must make a linkage with the trade."[45] But whether or not event marketing is the most effective promotional tool a company can use has not been fully explored.

Typical of many consumer product companies is Andrew Jergens Co., whose primary product is skin lotion. When it considers an event, the event must have promotional value. Richard Bryan, the company's marketing director, explains the ins-and-outs of the process.

> No event is attractive to us unless it prompts stores to get involved in merchandising, buy more product and give us extra shelf space and displays. The event also must motivate consumers to purchase more product.
>
> Two years ago, we were heavy FSI [free standing inserts, the coupon sections added to Sunday newspapers] users. With every drop, redemption rates were falling and it was becoming more difficult to get trade support behind the promotions. We started looking for other ways to move product. . . .
>
> Event sponsorship is significantly more difficult to execute than FSIs. You must coordinate the event, communicate to retailers that it is different than an FSI and structure the program so they know how much extra product to buy. Our salespeople have to work harder to convey the benefits of event promotion to buyers; buyers have to work harder to understand it.[46]

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[44] "Nestle Ice Cream" (1990), p. 6.

[45] Verbeke (1992), p. 6.

[46] "Jergens Smooths" (1991), pp. 1-2.

The promotional value of event marketing will most likely be gauged by using two different measures. The effectiveness of an event as a way to motivate the trade can be judged by the increase in the quantity of product ordered before, during, and after an event or by the number of new accounts opened. The promotional impact of an event on consumers can be measured by any increases in sales before, during, and after an event. Sometimes, however, companies settle for less: "We'll measure success by the number of retailers using our collateral materials and participating in co-op advertising when an event comes to their region,"[47] according to the vice-president of marketing for Holly Farms, a chicken company.

In general, sponsoring companies appear to be satisfied with special events as a promotional vehicle. In one study, only 12.5 percent of respondents felt sponsorship was not cost-effective when compared with other promotional vehicles. In contrast, 71 percent felt it was and 11 percent didn't know.[48] The following comment, made by a brand manager of car electronics marketing for Pioneer Electronics, typifies the kind of thinking which leads companies to use event marketing for promotions: "Our sales force has been asking us to get back into [auto] racing; it generates excitement among dealers."[49] Similarly, the product manager of Brut, a men's cologne, likes sponsoring boxing because "We'll bring key buyers to the fights, and when local retailers see us on TV they'll believe the product will move off their shelves."[50]

However, another study indicates that the trade is not overwhelmingly impressed by event marketing. Ninety-one head buyers and senior managers of supermarket chains indicated that only 54 percent felt sponsorships increased overall sales to consumers and that 43 percent felt they did not. (Two percent felt they

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47 "Holly Farms" (1990), p. 2.
48 Meenaghan (1983), p. 51.
49 "Montgomery Ward" (1989), p. 3.
50 "Brut Bursts" (1992), p. 6.

decreased sales.) "Of those who report sales increase, 13 percent indicate they go up 0-5 percent, 56 percent that they go up 6-10 percent, 28 percent that they go up 11-25 percent, and three percent that they go up at least 26 percent."[51] In regards to brand purchases, 51 percent said sponsorships increased the likelihood of consumer purchase and 48 percent said that they did not.

Twenty-eight percent felt sponsorships were more effective than ads and promotions, 47 percent said they were equally effective, and 25 percent said they were less effective. In regards to their relationship with companies, 40 percent of the buyers and managers said sponsorship improved them, while 58 percent said they had no effect. Sponsoring companies received more or better shelf space about half the time and the same space about half the time.

PUBLIC RELATIONS. The effectiveness of event marketing as a public relations vehicle is often judged using currently accepted methods. In general, companies look at how much coverage they receive (both length of stories and in numbers of outlets), the quality of the outlet (usually defined by the target audience), and whether or not the company was mentioned in a headline or photo. Sometimes a value is assigned based on the rate cost of an equivalent amount of advertising.

> (Various analyses exist, from suggesting that 30-seconds exposure time of a logo equates to a 30-second advertisement; to equations which "discount" the value of the sponsorship according to a fixed proportion; to a variable discount depending upon the logo size displayed.) . . . It is perfectly obvious, however, that a brand name mention in a newspaper or a perimeter board displayed on a television screen cannot possibly be valued against an advertisement in this way.[52]

A regional manager working for Aetna Insurance expressed pleasure with the company's sponsorship of a local marathon because "We could take out three Sunday

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[51] Gardner and Walker (1987), p. 14.

[52] Parker (1991), p. 27.

full-page newspaper ads for the same amount of money, but the sponsorship is worth far more with all the PR."[53] Similarly, Pier One, a chain of import stores, has been happy with its sponsorship of mobile mammography units because "We don't receive hundreds of thousands of dollars of business from this sponsorship, but the positive PR outweighs the cost,"[54] according to the director of media services.

One company launched a new perfume, called Les Fleurs de Claude Monet and sold only through museum shops, by sponsoring a lecture tour featuring an expert on Monet's Giverny gardens. The result was coverage in over 100 articles in national and local papers.[55]

ADVERTISING. Finally, event marketing is often viewed as a more cost-effective form of advertising. Rising media costs and increasing clutter have led many companies to view event marketing as an alternate way to create awareness. Therefore, they are likely to measure success by the number of times the company or product name is mentioned in print or shown on television.

"We know from experience that exposure of the Volvo name through sponsorship can be achieved at a much lower cost than traditional advertising,"[56] according to the head of the company's sponsorship unit. Similarly, the executive vice-president of Vivitar, a camera equipment company, says "We don't have the ad budget our competitors have, so we use sponsorship to narrow the visibility gap."[57] Eastman Kodak's director of corporate sponsorships and events also feels satisfied substituting events for advertising. "The media bill for a 60-second spot and the cost of the Kodak Rose Bowl Parade float are about the same. But the Kodak float appears

53 "Aetna Health Plans" (1992), p. 7.
54 "Pier 1" (1992), p. 7.
55 "New Fragrance" (1991), p. 3.
56 Ortendahl (1990), p. 4.
57 "Vivitar" (1990), p. 6.

on two networks for up to two minutes, for a total of four minutes on-air time. Plus it is viewed and photographed by millions more at the parade."[58]

Still, not everyone agrees that having a brand name or logo shown on the screen is especially valuable. According to studies done by Poole-Adamson Research Consultants, "the number of brand shots, seconds on screen and mentions does not guarantee success, and may, in excess, actually reduce both the message and brand association."[59]

The sales promotion director of Target, a chain of upscale discount stores agrees.". . .don't expect us to believe that having our logo on the bottom of a TV screen alongside three others for two seconds is worth the book value of a 30-second, prime-time spot."[60] Cost comparisons are much more useful to compare one event to another than to compare events to advertising. "We know quite a bit about the value of a medium relative to its own past but much less about its value in comparison to any other . . ."[61]

Awareness can also be measured through surveys. While some companies are content to measure post-event awareness, comparison of pre- and post-event awareness is the best way to judge the effectiveness of a particular event.

One insurance company in the United Kingdom measured awareness every six months after sponsoring cricket. Testing included unprompted name awareness, prompted name awareness, unprompted awareness of the company as a sports sponsor, prompted awareness of the company as a sports sponsor, and attitudes towards sponsorship. "The results of four six-monthly research studies indicated that unprompted awareness increased from 2 per cent to 8 per cent to 13 per cent to 16 per

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58 "Kodak Rides Winners" (1990).
59 Dunn (1992), p. TWIB10.
60 Eaton (1991), p. 5.
61 Fajen (1978), p. 113.

cent with evidence of a fall-off in cricket's off-season."[62]

In the case of Texaco, awareness of that company's association with auto racing in the United Kingdom rose from 18 percent in 1974 to 45 percent in 1977 to 45 percent in 1980 to 60 percent in 1988.[63]

It is questionable, however, how much awareness is really worth.[64] According to McQueen, "recall and pre-post persuasion measures do a much better job of measuring whether nonusers will give a single purchase trial than whether users will use a brand more often."[65] At the same time, "studies indicate that the majority of a growing brand's increased usage comes not from new buyers but existing households buying more frequently."[66] Therefore, by using an event to increase awareness in nonusers, a company wanting to increase sales may be focusing its efforts on the wrong audience:

> When you are talking to someone aware of a brand, who has used the brand recently and has a well-formed brand judgment, you may talk differently than when you are talking to someone unaware of the brand, who may never have used the brand and has a hazy or no brand judgment.[67]

The awareness component of event sponsorship is also problematic for another reason. In some cases consumers correctly connect an event with a product category, but then confuse the real sponsors with their competitors. This is especially the case when competitors heavily advertise while the event is going on. Sandler and Shani found that after the 1988 Calgary Olympics, surveyed viewers misidentified sponsors in three of seven product categories.

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62 Meenaghan (1983), 53.

63 Meenaghan (1991a), p. 45.

64 See Beattie and Mitchell (1985) for a discussion of the weak relationship between recall and persuasion.

65 McQueen (1990), p. RC-15.

66 Ibid., p. RC-16.

67 Ibid.

> This might indicate that to achieve any benefits from being a sponsor it is necessary not only for a company to sponsor an event such as the Olympics but to heavily advertise the fact that they are *official* sponsors. Buying the rights to be an "official sponsor" may, in reality, only be buying a license to spend more money![68]

Finally, in some cases awareness of a company's connection to an event is so successful, the public forgets the product. "Gillette is reputed to have stopped sponsoring cricket after almost 20 years, when market research suggested that more people were beginning to associate its name with cricket bats than its product, which is, of course, razor blades."[69]

Two other advertising roles event marketing can play are image enhancement and target marketing. In fact, event marketing may be the primary vehicle used to carry out these two tasks for hard-to-position products and for hard-to-reach audiences.

A number of studies, for example, have shown that products can take on the image of their endorsers. (Walker, Langmeyer, and Langmeyer,1992. McCracken, 1989) Therefore it is reasonable to assume that the participants in an event might also influence product image as well. In one study, researchers using pre- and post-tests found that Korea and Korean products were viewed more favorably by respondents after they had been heavily exposed to television coverage of the l988 Seoul Olympics (Nebenzahl and Jaffe, 1991). This case is especially noteworthy because there was no accompanying promotion or advertising of these products to reinforce the linkage.

In another instance, Yardley, a British firm known for perfume and bath products, used Formula One racing to "dilute the feminine connotations of its name" in order to introduce a men's line.[70]

Public relations specialist Art Stevens coined the word "brandstanding" to

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68 Sandler and Shani (1989), p. 13.
69 Witcher, et. al. (1991), p. 21.
70 Meenaghan (1991a), p. 41.

describe "Linking a tried-and-true product--or product line--to an event, issue or idea [to create] for the item or brand name an aura of excitement, interest and reliability, and renewed vitality."[71]

According to Meenaghan:

> The notion that individual media vehicles are perceived by audiences to have individual personalities is fundamental to the concept of media vehicle effect. An individual sponsorship activity is similarly possessed of a personality (which is not necessarily static in the public's perception) and there is a rub-off or halo effect to corporate or product image from association with each sponsorship.[72]

Event marketing may also be an option when "advertising is incompatible with a firm's image"[73] (e.g., professionals wanting to avoid a hard-sell approach and owners of exclusive retail stores not wanting to alienate current customers). However, companies run the risk of doing themselves more harm than good if they sponsor low image events. Jacoby and Mazursky's study of the relationship between brands and retailers might apply to event marketing as well:

> It appears that a manufacturer (or brand) having a very positive image is likely to have the image damaged if it becomes associated with retailers who have less positive images. On the other hand, association with retailers having more favorable images than itself will do little or nothing to improve the manufacturer's brand's relatively lower image.[74]

Image can be especially important to companies that want to change consumers' attitudes about them or their products. Studies have shown that linkage with popular causes or events usually produces positive feelings toward the company. One British company, Mercury Communications, used an art show to encourage attendees to try the company's phone cards. "Before the event, they overwhelmingly chose coins [to call from pay phones]; 17 percent chose the BT [British Telecom, the

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71 Stevens (1984), p. 31.

72 Meenaghan (1983), p. 31.

73 Gardner and Shuman (1988), p.

74 Jacoby and Mazursky (1984), p. 121.

public phone company] cards, while nine percent opted for Mercurycards. Afterwards, 67 percent opted for phone cards, with Mercury thrashing BT, 55 percent to 12 percent."[75]

The Chicago Mayor's Office of Special Events surveyed attendees at various events held in the city and found that 52-to-62 percent left feeling more favorably impressed by the event's sponsors and 33-to-43 percent said they were more likely to buy the sponsors' products.[76] Similarly, researchers Ross, Patterson, and Stutts found that people said they were more willing to purchase Procter & Gamble products after seeing an ad stating that P & G would donate 10 cents to the Special Olympics for every coupon redeemed. However, no measure of actual behavior was made. (Ross; Patterson; and Stutts, 1988)

In contrast, a British liquor company found that while it was gaining considerable publicity from sponsoring a horse race, a market research survey "showed that attitudes to the brand [of cognac] were no more positive for those cognac drinkers who could identify the brand's association with the sponsorship than among those respondents who were unaware of the brand sponsorship."[77] And even if those attitudes had been more favorable, many studies have pointed out that attitude is often a poor predictor of behavior.[78]

Since the link between attitude and behavior may not be strong, it is not surprising that image enhancement is not longer a primary goal of many sponsors. Summarizing the impressions of a number of people working at event marketing agencies, Ardy Arani, president of The Championship Group/Atlanta, said:

The message we're hearing across the board is that sponsorship must

[75] Spero (1992), p. 4.

[76] "How the Chicago Mayor's Office" (1992), p. 4.

[77] Meenaghan (1983), p. 55.

[78] According to Petty, et. al. (1991), ". . .attitudes that appear identical when measured can be quite different in their underlying basis or structure and thus can be quite different in their temporal persistence, resistance, or in their ability to predict behavior." p. 266.

> be tied to measurable sales criteria. In this economy, a payback is essential. The days of event marketing as an image effort are over. Now, there must be a sales component. The structure of the event and everything else is becoming secondary to its ability to improve the bottom line.[79]

Event marketing may have more success in the area of target marketing. It may be one of the few ways to reach potential customers who aren't likely to respond to mass media advertising. For example, it has been suggested that by focusing on a theme and by charging admission (which would prequalify the audience by eliminating marginal participants) event organizers can enhance their ability to deliver a target market. (Barczak, et al., 1992).

Sometimes, however, companies ignore the benefits of target marketing. For example, one event organizer had survey data to prove his bass fishing tournament attracted a large number of bourbon drinkers (61 percent of the respondents). He went to a bourbon company with the numbers and was told they wanted to use the event to market their rye instead, even though only 8 percent of the event participants drank it.[80]

Another aspect of using events to target market is consumer loyalty. One study (Mullin, 1983) has suggested that "sports consumers have a more intense, personal identification with the sport product than is common for consumers of other goods."[81] According to the above-mentioned bass fishing event organizer

> Eighty percent of respondents said their buying habits were influenced by sponsor products, meaning they would shift brands. . . .For example, in 1986, 15 percent of our members owned a Ranger boat and another 21 percent said they intended to purchase one. By 1989, 27 percent of our members owned and 43 percent intended to buy.[82]

One reason for consumer support of sponsoring products may be the

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79 "What Do Sponsors Want?" (1991), p. 4.

80 "Evaluation" (1990), p. 6.

81 Chalip (1992), p. 88.

82 "Evaluation" (1990), p. 6.

entertainment value of the event. "Of all the elements in the marketing mix, special events is the only one that exposes people to a product in an environment that matches their lifestyle rather than intrudes upon it,"[83] according to the director of consumer influence operations for General Motors. Similarly, *Special Events Report* notes that "Advertising is a monologue; the '90s consumer wants a dialogue. Sponsorship is the only marketing platform that links companies with leisure pursuits such as sports, culture, entertainment and causes--precisely the type of communication to which today's consumers will respond."[84]

Research has shown that the more people are involved in the television shows they are watching, the more effective the accompanying advertising is (as measured by recall, credibility, purchase interest, and pre/post purchase intention). (Lloyd and Clancy, 1991) This same effect might be found with involving events as well.[85]

The entertainment value of sports and cultural events also make them especially suitable for global marketing campaigns because they can transcend cultural barriers. (Nebenzahl and Jaffe, 1991; Meenaghan, 1991b; Chalip, 1992)

One aspect of event marketing worth keeping in mind, however, is that people who participate in sports are likely to be different than those who watch them. According to one study, there was almost no correlation between the two groups (Shamir and Ruskin, 1984). Therefore it might be very difficult to reach both with one event.

The very specificity of certain special events, of course, can make them inappropriate advertising vehicles to reach mass audiences. Waite has suggested that while sponsorship is more cost-effective than advertising for smaller audiences,

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83 Weed (1990), p. 4

84 "IEG's Ninth" (1991), p. 1.

85 See Assael (1984), pp. 99-100, for a discussion of ways to shift consumers from low to high involvement.

this is not the case on a larger scale. ". . . because of the nature of sponsorship there is often a definite ceiling on the extent of media coverage as, for instance, in the case of opera where the total audience reached has an upper limit regardless of the level of sponsorship expenditure."[86] For this reason, one company, TDK Electronics, the largest U.S. manufacturer of audio and video tapes, has chosen not to sponsor music events although there would appear to be a natural connection. "Tastes are so varied that you only gain awareness with small, ultra-specific demographics,"[87] according to the company's promotions manager. Instead, the company sponsors auto racing, surfing, and snowboarding.

In another example, Salem, a cigarette brand, quit sponsoring ProSail, a sailing event, after two years because "it just did not deliver the large on-site audience we require,"[88] according to the senior public relations director for the in-house sports marketing division of the parent company, RJR Nabisco. The event also did not reach black smokers, the primary market for menthol cigarettes.

In summary, it appears that sponsoring events which are televised to large audiences may offer a cost-effective substitute for mass market advertising, while sponsoring smaller events which attract enthusiastic fans is better for target marketing. According to Tom Healey, a partner at J. D. Power and Associates, a consumer survey company, "it is sometimes more effective to reach 10,000 bona fide prospects 'in an overwhelmingly impactful way than to reach 100,000 of them with light messages which have light impact.'"[89]

OTHER MEASUREMENT ISSUES. The advantage of using the same measures of

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86 Meenaghan (1983), p. 60.
87 "TDK Fast Forwards" (1989), p. 1.
88 "Sponsorship Cookie Crumbles" (1990), p. 1.
89 Strand (1991), p. 14i.

effectiveness for event marketing as for other components of the marketing communication mix is the opportunity to judge which are the most cost-effective. However, there are two reasons why this approach may not be used. (1) Event marketing is rarely conducted under isolated and controlled situations. To reap the greatest benefits, companies are usually advised to combine event marketing with supplemental advertising, promotions, and public relations. (Parker, 1991) Therefore, a company is unlikely to be measuring the effectiveness of event marketing alone. (2) A reasonable case can be made that in fact event marketing cannot be compared to other forms of marketing communication because it is a unique form of communication which must be subjected to entirely new forms of effectiveness measurement.

There are many examples of the inseparability of events from other marketing communications efforts. For example, Canon achieved an increase in awareness from 18.5 percent to 79 percent during a three-year sponsorship of the English Football League, but it was accomplished with "considerable support expenditure in other media."[90] In Texas, Miller Brewery Co. "boosted sales by 6.5 percent in '89 by sponsoring a statewide party. But, as is often the case, the sponsorship's impact cannot be separated from paid ads; of the $15 million spent on the event, more than half went to media buys."[91] Kinder-Care, a chain of day-care centers, quit sponsoring Sea World because it couldn't attribute any increase in awareness to it. "We conducted image surveys each September, and the percentage of responses grew slightly. But that growth was due to lots of factors, not just the sponsorship."[92] Similarly, Fuji Film sponsored the 1984 Olympics but chose not to in 1988. While market share went from 11 percent before the games to 15 percent after, the

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90 Meenaghan (1991a), p. 41.

91 "Stroh Drops Sponsorship" (1990), p. 3.

92 "Kinder-Care Plays Polo" (1991), p. 6.

company's public relations director said that "The sponsorship got us awareness, but I can't say we wouldn't have had the same results if we spent the money differently."[93]

According to Meenaghan, seven factors "complicate" the measurement of sponsorship effects:

> (1) The simultaneous usage of other marketing mix/communication mix variables. . . .
> (2) The carry-over effect of previous marketing communications effort. . . .
> (3) The synergistic effect of marketing communications variables. . . .
> (4) Uncontrollable environmental factors. . . .
> (5) The effects of qualitative inputs in marketing communications. . . .
> (6) The pursuit of multiple objectives. . . .
> (7) The discretionary nature of media coverage.[94]

THE UNIQUENESS OF EVENT MARKETING. The true value of special events may lie not in their use as a variation of traditional marketing communications techniques, but as an entirely new form of communication. Although currently special events are used primarily as low-cost substitutes for print and broadcast advertising (i.e., just one more place to display a logo or brand name), research suggests that in fact they might offer something quite different. "In contrast to advertisements, which are typically read by one person at a time or by unpredictable combinations of people, sponsored events are frequently attended by the entire family. The joint experience and exposure to the sponsor's message seem to create synergies in the buying decision."[95]

Events offer multisensory, participatory experiences which impart a heightened level of symbolism to products. (O'Shaughnessy and Holbrook, 1988). "Indeed, perceptions of the product as a subjective symbol rather than a concrete object can account for the selection of brands that are clearly inferior in terms of their tangible

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93 Fannin (1988), p. 66
94 Meenaghan (1983), p. 48-50.
95 Gardner and Shuman (1988)

features, but are viewed as subjectively superior symbols."[96] According to Blackwell and Crihfield, "the principal element of the special event is its *subliminal embedded communication message*. . . .special events are defined and characterized by the heavy significance of non-verbal communication patterns and media."[97]

Symbolism can originate in three forms. Consumers may purchase products to enhance or communicate their self-images. Consumers can interact with products and as a result derive symbolism from them. Consumers can participate in symbolic experiences and transfer those feelings to products. (Solomon, 1983) It is this last condition which is particularly relevant to event marketing.

Researchers have for some time now been aware of the importance of atmosphere to the retail environment. "In some cases, the place, more specifically the *atmosphere* of the place, is more influential than the product itself in the purchase decision. In some cases, the atmosphere is the primary product."[98]

Hirschman and Holbrook's work on hedonic consumption is relevant to this concept of atmosphere.

> . . .the goal of experiencing emotive stimulation becomes an important end state for consumers, quite apart from enjoyment of the product purchased. Thus, shopping environments that are made more enjoyable, exciting, and multisensory may become not only more desirable for their own sake, they may also "inject" positive affect into the product evaluation and decision-making process.[99]

According to Kotler, the atmosphere can be an attention-creating medium, a message-creating medium, or an affect-creating medium.[100] While much of the research in this area has been done in conjunction with retail environments, more

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96 Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), p. 94.
97 Blackwell and Crihfield (1991), p. 34.
98 Kotler (1973-74), p. 48.
99 Cohen and Areni (1991), p. 206.
100 Ibid., p. 54.

recently a few observers have extended the concept of atmosphere to other settings. Verbeke (1992) uses the term, "an environmental shaping process," to define marketing and it seems applicable here.

According to Chalip, sporting events like the Olympics are polysemic--"they can tap multiple sources of affective meaning."[101] However, most consumer behavior theories are concerned with cognitive processes such as encoding, recall, and decision-making, which may be why so little progress has been made on determining the effectiveness of event marketing as a marketing communications tool. "The problem with nonverbal communication . . .is that we don't know enough about how to measure it."[102]

Chalip sees two possible benefits for marketing through polysemic events. (1) More credibility: " . . .cognitively targeted messages are processed evaluatively, whereas dramatic narratives appeal to subjective criteria and are therefore processed empathically. Thus, some consumer skepticism may be circumvented via affectively targeted messages."[103] (2) A wider range of interpretation: "A particular advantage of addressing affect via intentional creation and use of narratives, genres, and symbols is that multiple segments of the potential fan audience can be targeted."[104] But, on the other hand, according to Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), current event patrons may abandon an event if other subgroups are encouraged to attend.

The challenge for event marketers is sorting out which audiences will receive what messages. "To be successful, an event must be made up of elements that are designed to appeal to specific attitudes and to trigger specific interactive communication responses."[105] Unfortunately, not enough research has been done to

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101 Chalip (1992), p. 89.
102 Stewart and Hecker (1988), p. 262.
103 Chalip (1992), p. 95.
104 Ibid.
105 Blackwell and Crihfield (1991), p. 34.

explain and measure the process.

Until we know more about how different groups take in symbolic meaning and how they evaluate hedonic consumption, we will have difficulty taking full advantage of special events. Hirschman and Holbrook point out that while different subgroups appear to "vary in their perception of what products are appropriate for hedonic consumption,"[106] little has been done to develop techniques to measure it. ". . . in order to develop and apply segment-appropriate narratives, genres, and symbols, it is necessary to determine the kinds of narratives, genres, and symbols (and the attendant interpretations) preferred by different groups."[107]

Very soon, however, we may be on the verge of revising our theories on the effectiveness of marketing communication, which might lead to breakthroughs in measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of special events. For example, single-source data collection (test marketing by giving certain consumers ID cards which identify them and their purchases) has indicated that traditional advertising and promotions are not nearly as effective as has been thought (Stewart, 1989; Abraham and Lodish, 1990) and that "traditional ways of measuring advertising, such as recall and penetration, do not translate into sales movement."[108]

Abraham and Lodish recommend that "A company should spend significant resources to develop creative, hard-to-imitate promotion events [special events, perhaps?], then use single-source data to test the idea."[109]

Of course, there is the potential to overdo and wear out event marketing. "If life becomes nothing but an event, events will become a problem. The key to event marketing's future is to protect the principle that it was built upon: to deliver

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106 Hirschman and Holbrook (1982), p. 99.
107 Ibid.
108 Petersen (1991), p. 9.
109 Abraham and Lodish (1990), pp. 59-60.

'specialness.'"[110] So says Christopher Whittle, chairman of Whittle Communications, and a pioneer in the use of non-traditional advertising.

CONCLUSION

Although this paper is meant to be a comprehensive look at event marketing as it exists today, it is really nothing more than a road map. Considerably more research and experimentation need to be done before we can fully understand to what degree special events can be used as a marketing tool. However, based on the material presented above, some guidelines can be developed:

(1) Events as sales, couponing, and sampling opportunities make sense. In each case, the goal is very specific and easily measurable. Cost per contact and cost per sale can be calculated and compared to other methods.

(2) Events that reach otherwise unreachable customers also make sense. This has particular relevance as companies attempt to do business in countries where marketing communication channels are still poorly developed.

(3) Events that effectively demonstrate the product make sense. There is a natural link between food products and cooking contests, between auto products and car racing, between athletic shoes and aerobics contests. In addition, events allow more time for demonstration than advertising and even trade shows.

(4) Events that actively involve participants with the product may make sense. However, this type of event marketing is not a mass medium and therefore is best used for products directed at highly targeted audiences.

(5) Events that generate publicity may make sense. These events must actually generate stories, not just mention of names and logos, and must be more cost-effective

[110] "Damoose, Whittle" (1992), p. 2.

than other public relations efforts.

(6) Events that merely substitute for other marketing communication tools don't make sense. More is known about the effectiveness of the other tools and therefore they are less likely to disappoint when called upon to do what they do best.

In conclusion, event marketing offers opportunities to reach consumers in a form that other marketing communications techniques do not. If it is used as a medium which actually enhances product presentation, it will be effective. If not, it will become a fad, soon to be replaced by another marketing communication novelty.

DISTRIBUTION OF EVENTS FUNCTIONS

ID	280	100%
Target Marketing	150	54%
Promotional Tie-In	137	49%
Entertainment Opportunity	81	29%
Sampling or Couponing Opportunity	74	26%
Awareness	67	24%
Image	61	22%
Usage	49	18%
PR	46	16%
Contests	43	15%
Athlete Tie-In	37	13%
Demonstration Opportunity	35	12%
Sales Opportunity	25	9%
Employee Incentive or Morale	25	9%
Community Relations	22	8%
Mailing List Generator	19	7%
Business-to-Business	18	6%
Executives	9	3%
Recruiting	2	1%
Consumer Involvement	1	-

CHART 1

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EVOLUTION OF THE MANAGERIAL ROLE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

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Paper presented to the Public Relations Division
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
Annual Convention, Kansas City,
August 12, 1993

ABSTRACT

EVOLUTION OF THE MANAGERIAL ROLE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

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Paper presented to the Public Relations Division
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The researchers conducted a comparison of public relations manager role enactment in 1979 and 1991. Using independent systematic samples of PRSA members in 1979 (N=458) and 1991 (N=207), variables related to role enactment were tested in a causal model and compared over time (12 years).

Key elements of the causal model remained constant. Gender (male) is positively related to professional experience; professional experience is positively related to predominant manager role enactment. Predominant manager role enactment, in turn, is positively related to participation in management decision making. Decision-making participation is positively related to both salary and job satisfaction.

Key changes over time involve reduction in indicators of gender role segregation and salary discrimination. Specifically, gender (male) is positively related to predominant manager role enactment in 1979, after controlling for professional experience. In 1991, this residual variance is reduced to an insignificant level.

In 1979, significant salary differences between men and women remain, after controlling for professional experience, manager role enactment, and decision-making participation. Arguably, such residual difference in salaries indicates gender salary discrimination. In 1991, this residual difference in salary is reduced to an insignificant level.

EVOLUTION OF THE MANAGERIAL ROLE IN PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE

In the conduct of inquiry about public relations practices, perhaps no concept has proven so theoretically and empirically useful as organizational **role**. The roles that public relations practitioners enact are "at the nexus of a network of concepts affecting professional achievements of practitioners, structures and processes of the function in organizations, and organizational capacities to dominate or cooperate with their environments" (Dozier, 1992). Practitioner roles are indicators of the power of the public relations units in organizations (Lauzen, 1992; Lauzen & Dozier, 1992). Roles indicate whether public relations units participate in strategic decision making of the dominant coalition, or simply execute decisions made by others (Dozier, 1986; Broom & Dozier, 1986). Roles are linked to environmental scanning (Dozier, 1987, 1990) and to issues management (Lauzen, 1993). Roles are linked to models of public relations practices (Grunig & Grunig, 1989). Roles contribute to the salaries of public relations practitioners and how much satisfaction practitioners derive from public relations work (Broom & Dozier, 1986). Of the 1,700 individual characteristics of 283 organizations examined in the Excellence Study (IABC Research Foundation, 1991; Grunig, 1992), knowledge to enact the manager role was the single most powerful correlate of excellence in public relations and communication management.

The concept of role also plays a pivotal role in the empirical and normative debate about gender discrimination in public relations work. Prior research indicates that segregation of women in the technician role contributes to salary differences between men and women practitioners (Dozier, Chapo & Sullivan, 1983). On the one hand, some argue that such documented gender differences in salary are "misinformation" perpetuated by feminists in support of a larger political agenda (Hutton, 1993). On the other hand, some argue that roles research trivializes and devalues the largely technical work that women do in public relations (Creedon, 1991).

The present study examines a model of public relations practices that links gender, professional experience, and education of practitioners to roles they enact in organizations. Role enactment is influenced by the number of practitioners in the public relations unit. Role enactment, in turn, affects practitioner participation in decision making of the dominant coalition. Role enactment and decision-making participation, in turn, affect practitioner salaries and the satisfaction they derive from their work. Comparable samples of practitioners from 1979 and 1991 are analyzed to see if the model has evolved over the intervening 12 years. Based on an analysis of that evolutionary process, we cautiously enter the normative debate over gender discrimination in public relations work.

The Concept of Role

In their seminal work on organizations, Katz and Kahn (1978) gave the "role concept a central place in our theory of organizations," defining human organizations as "role systems" (p. 186). Katz and Kahn (1978) defined role behavior as "recurring actions of an individual, appropriately interrelated with the repetitive activities of others so as to yield a predictable outcome" (p. 189). An organizational **role** is an abstraction, conceptual order imposed by the observer on the many different activities of individuals in organizations. As such, the abstractions of roles are created more than discovered; the value of these abstractions rests on their utility to help scholars make sense out of organizational behavior, its antecedence, and its consequences.

We view organizational roles as central our model of public relations practices and to our theory of the public relations function in organizations. Specifically, we define public relations as the "management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends" (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985, p. 4).

Arguably, this definition is more normative than positive, for it describes a function that is more than -- and different from -- the myriad of activities commonly labeled as "public relations" in organizations. As a **management** function, public relations must participate in the governance of organizations. Participation can take the form of a communication liaison role; the practitioner creates opportunities for management and key publics to communicate with each other. Participation can involve a role of facilitating processes whereby the dominant coalition (including public relations management) makes decisions about public relations issues. Participation also can take the form of expert prescription; the practitioner makes policy decisions about the organization's public relations programs and is held accountable for their success or failure.

We explicitly exclude the term **communication** from our definition of the public relations function, because communication -- and especially mediated communication -- is but one tool used to bring about the functional outcomes of mutually beneficial relationships. Environmental scanning, issues management, program monitoring, and impact evaluation are all tasks as central to the function as is communication through the media. That is, we accept Grunig's (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) two-way models of public relations as integral to the function. The public relations function is key to organizational feedback, acting as eyes and ears of organizations, as well as their mouthpieces.

The technical task of creating and disseminating communication, especially mediated communication, is core to the public relations function. As our research has shown (Broom & Dozier, 1986), some practitioners build their careers around this creative specialization and exhibit high levels of job satisfaction in the stability of technician role enactment over time. The "creative artistic" practitioner seems to gravitate to technician role enactment (Dozier & Gottesman, 1982).

In roles research, the concept of **predominant role** has proved useful. If a practitioner enacts activities of the manager role set with greater frequency than

activities of the technician role set, then the practitioner can be categorized as a "manager." By the same logic, "technicians" are so classified because they enact technician role activities more frequently than manager role activities. As conceptualized and operationalized, however, each public relations practitioner enacts activities of both the manager and technician roles. Enacting one role does not preclude enacting the other role; the two role sets are independent (orthogonal). Manager and technician role activities are different, but not mutually exclusive nor in opposition to each other.

We make a meso-level (organizational) value judgment when we assert public relations is a management function. This normative prescription is not a micro-level (individual) value judgment. Whereas the **function** should participate in dominant coalition decision making, **individual practitioners** should engage in a range of role activities that match talent, preferences and needs of the public relations unit. Individual practitioners should have some choice of role enactment, free of institutionalized patterns of gender segregation and discrimination. We return to this point in the conclusions section of this paper.

Practitioner roles provide a useful way to link individual attributes of practitioners and characteristics of the public relations unit to the function's participation in the management of organizations. This participation, in turn, has consequences for individual practitioners.

The Theoretical Model

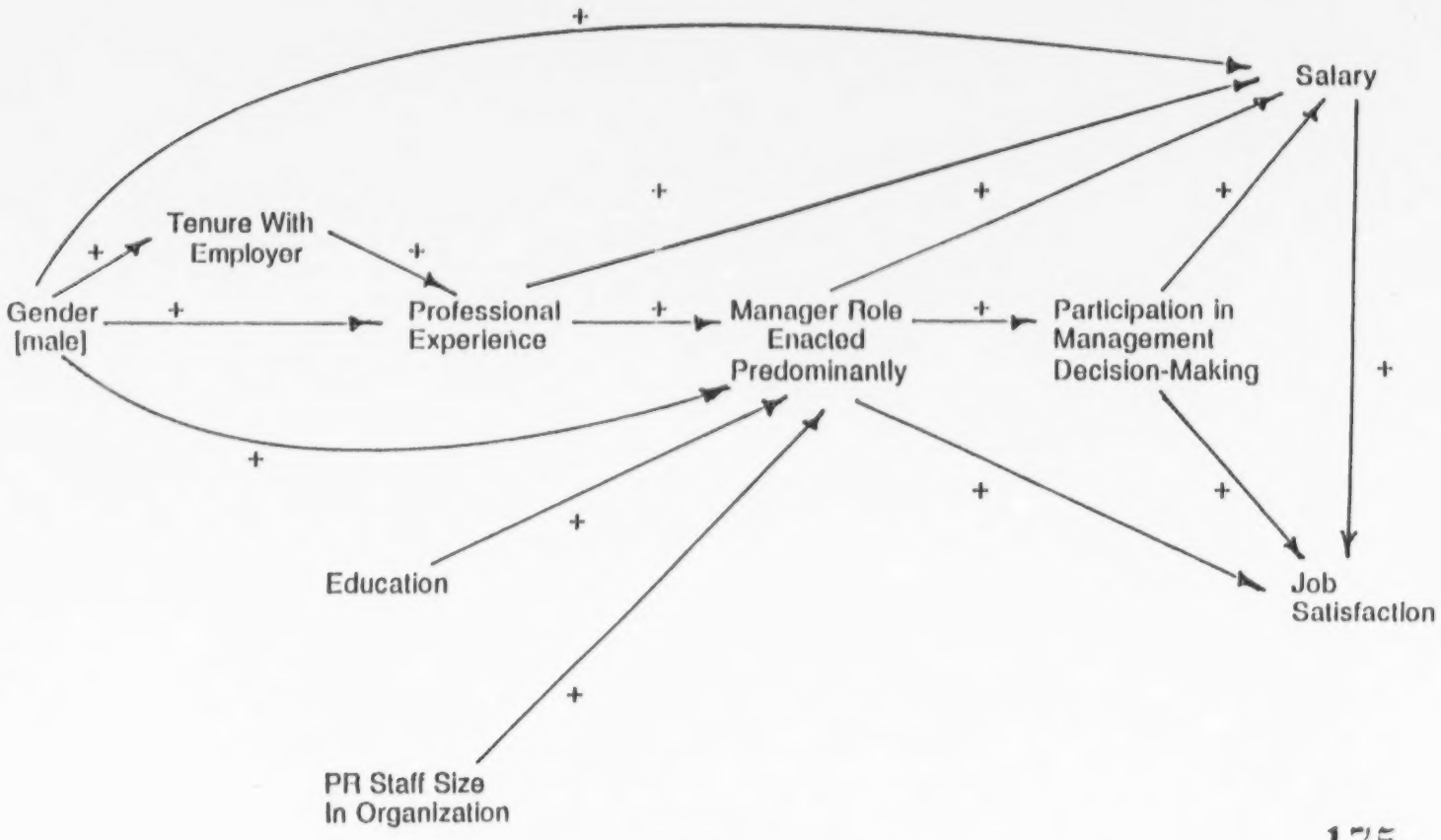
The theoretical model in Figure 1 posits relationships between attributes of practitioners, organizational attributes, and roles practitioners enact in organizations. Antecedent to all concepts in the model is practitioner gender, a proxy measure for differential patterns of socialization and differential patterns of opportunities (or denial of opportunities) in organizations. Gender is linked to different levels of professional experience and length of employment (tenure) with current employer. This is due to the radical transformation of the public relations labor force. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the public relations labor force shifted from less than 44 percent women in 1979 (U. S. Department of Labor, 1980, p. 174) to over 56 percent women in 1991 (U. S. Department of Labor, 1992, p. 186). Public relations remains a female-majority occupation (about 59 percent) today.

As a consequence, male practitioners (as a group) possess many more years of professional experience in public relations and related mass media work. They also have been employed longer in their present job. The model posits that gender is related to professional experience and that professional experience affects the occupational role enacted. In addition, the model posits gender exerts an influence on role enactment, independent of professional experience. Specifically, men are more likely than women to enact the manager role predominantly, even if differences in professional experience were equalized.

Our presupposition is that this residual difference in role enactment is a consequence of gender discrimination. Senior management sends different role expectations to men and women. Through use of informal assistants, men are

Figure 1.

Model Linking Practitioner Attributes to Professional Outcomes Using Role Enactment



groomed for role advancement from technician to manager. Women, we posit, are not. This fosters gender differences in internalized role aspirations, which Lauzen (1992) has shown is linked to role enactment. Thus, the existence of such a relationship serves to decompose the actual mechanisms of gender discrimination, manifest in salary differences.

The model in Figure 1 also posits that practitioner education contributes to enactment of the manager role. Lauzen (1992) provides evidence that role competencies are related to manager role enactment. The model also posits that in order for any practitioner in the public relations unit to enact the manager role predominantly, he or she must have the additional staff support in the technical areas to concentrate on manager role activities. The larger the staff in the public relations unit, the greater the opportunity to engage in manager role activities predominantly.

Enactment of specific manager role behaviors results in practitioner involvement in decision making of the organization's senior managers, the dominant coalition. We posit that manager role enactment and decision-making participation exert reciprocal influences. By facilitating communication between the dominant coalition and key publics, practitioners become involved in decision making as useful "go-betweens" or boundary spanners. Enactment of the problem-solving process facilitator role makes practitioners valued counsel to senior-level decision making. Participation in decision making, in turn, increases demand for such role behavior from the dominant coalition.

Manager role enactment and decision-making participation, in turn, lead to higher salaries for such practitioners. Years of professional experience also contribute to higher salaries, but we posit that manager role enactment and decision-making participation both boost salaries above levels accounted for by "time in service."

We posit manager role enactment and decision-making participation increase practitioner job satisfaction. A common lament among practitioners is that they are excluded from decision making and thus unable to counsel the dominant coalition to avoid public relations mistakes. Instead, such practitioners are brought in after "it hits the fan" to repair the damage or cover it up, a markedly dissatisfying charge. Although higher salaries may lead to higher levels of job satisfaction, decision-making participation provides common conceptual linkage to both.

Methodology

In 1979, Broom (1982) conducted a systematic sample of the membership directory of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Of the original sample of 815 practitioners, 458 (56 percent of the original sample) returned completed responses to the role item set. In 1991, Broom and Dozier conducted a systematic sample of the membership directories of PRSA and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). Of the original sample of 692 practitioners, 207 PRSA members and 135 IABC members responded, an overall response rate of 49 percent. In order to make direct comparisons to the 1979 survey, PRSA members in

the 1991 sample were isolated. Among PRSA members, the 1991 response rate was 54 percent. All analyses reported in this paper were conducted on comparable samples of PRSA members in 1979 and 1991.

Role Measures

The present study uses a battery of 24 items developed by Broom (Broom & Smith, 1979; Broom, 1982) to measure different role activities of practitioners. Broom conceptualized practitioners as consultants to senior management, providing services and/or influencing processes. As detailed elsewhere (Broom, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Dozier, 1992), practitioners act as expert prescribers when management treats them as experts with the experience and savvy to prescribe solutions to public relations problems or issues. As in the traditional doctor-patient relationship, the expert prescriber dictates and management complies in order to get back to "business as usual." The problem-solving process facilitator helps management work through public relations problems to a satisfactory solution. Whereas expert prescription leads to passive management involvement in solving public relations problems, problem-solving process facilitation seeks active management involvement in a collaborative problem-solving process that leads to strong management "ownership" of solutions reached. The communication facilitator acts as a "go-between," creating opportunities for senior management to hear from key publics and key publics to hear from management.

The communication technician provides technical communication services to the organization, once decisions have been made by management. Alternatively conceptualized as "journalists in residence," such practitioners are hired for their writing and media expertise, becoming the wordsmiths and media relations specialists concerned primarily with crafting and placing messages in the media or publishing materials for internal publics.

Various practitioners and educators have suggested that the technician label is pejorative and devalues such work. Creedon (1991) suggested "creative specialist," "communication producer" or "information producer" as better descriptors of the role. Such relabeling, however, contributes little to the explanatory and predictive power of the model. We generally regard such tinkering with labels as misdirected and unproductive. Such concern for nomenclature, however, does reflect concern about presuppositions and values that underlie roles research. Ferguson (1987) challenged roles researchers "to be explicit about their assumptions particularly with regard to whether any one role is more desirable or to be more highly valued." We address these normative concerns at the end of this paper, after first seeking to clarify what we know about roles from a positivist perspective.

Broom operationalized six measures for each for the four conceptual roles above. This 24-item set has been used in scores of practitioner role studies since first developed in the late 1970s (Dozier, 1992). Broom (1980, 1982) first noted the high intercorrelation of the three conceptual roles of expert prescription, problem-solving process facilitation, and communication facilitation. Dozier (1983) conducted exploratory factor analysis of three separate surveys to conclude that expert

prescription, process facilitation, and communication facilitation constitute conceptually distinct components of a single organizational role, the public relations manager. Subsequent studies tend to support this empirical generalization (Dozier, 1984, 1992; Anderson, Reagan, Summer & Hill, 1989).

The first objective of the present study was to analyze the stability of the role measures over time. Both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis were conducted on the 1979 and 1991 data sets. A four-factor solution emerged when the 1979 role set was subjected to exploratory principal-components factor analysis and rotated to a varimax solution. The four factors account for 62 percent of the variance in the 24-item role set. A five-factor solution emerged when the 1991 role set was subjected to the same factor analysis, accounting for 66 percent of the variance in the set.

The manager role emerged as the first factor in both analyses. The same eleven items loaded heavily on the first factor, indicating stability over the 12-year interim. Five items emerged on the technician factor in both the 1979 and the 1991. A "senior adviser" factor also emerged in both the factor analysis of the 1979 and 1991 role sets. Originally labeled the "communication liaison" factor (Dozier, 1984), the "senior adviser" role tends to overlap with the manager role with regard to several role activities.

Activities specific to the "senior adviser" role include conducting communication audits to identify communication problems, reporting public opinion survey results to keep management informed of opinions of various publics, and creating opportunities for management to hear the views of publics. Regarding problem-solving process facilitation, both managers and senior advisers act as catalysts in management decision making, work with managers to develop their public relations problem-solving skills, help management follow a systematic public relations planning process, diagnose public relations problems, and outline alternative solutions to problems. Activities specific to the manager role include making communication policy decisions and being held accountable for program success or failure. As argued (Dozier, 1983, 1992), senior advisers are managers thwarted by organizational constraints from participation in management decision-making. Senior advisers are informal managers without formal policy-making power.

As indicated in previous research (Dozier, 1983), the minor role of media relations specialist proved unstable. This role consists of maintaining media contacts, placing press releases, and keeping others in the organization informed of what the media report about the organization. In this analysis, the two media relations items clustered on a single factor for the 1991 role set but were split between the manager and technician factors for the 1979 role set.

Based on the stability of the two-role factor solution in prior studies, the 1979 and 1991 role sets were separately subjected to two-factor confirmatory factor analysis. The results are displayed in Table 1 for the manager role and Table 2 for the technician role. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis are consistent with prior research.

Table 1.

Factor Loadings for Manager Role Items in 1979 and 1991 PRSA Surveys

Ave	1979	1991	Item Description
.84	.83	.84	I plan and recommend courses of action for solving public relations problems [PF]
.83	.80	.85	I diagnose public relations problems and explain them to others in the organization [PF]
.81	.82	.80	Because of my experience and training, others consider me the organization's expert in solving public relations problems [EP]
.81	.79	.83	I operate as a catalyst in management's decision making [PF]
.79	.82	.76	In meetings with management, I point out the need to follow a systematic public relations planning process [PF]
.79	.77	.80	I take responsibility for the success or failure of my organization's public relations program [EP]
.75	.76	.74	I keep management informed of public reactions to organizational policies, procedures and/or actions [CF]
.75	.75	.74	I observe that others in the organization hold me accountable for the success or failure of public relations programs [EP]
.73	.74	.71	I encourage management participation when making the important public relations decisions [PF]
.73	.73	.73	I work with managers to increase their skills in solving and/or avoiding public relations problems [PF]
.72	.73	.71	When working with managers on public relations, I outline alternative approaches for solving problems [PF]
.70	.70	.70	I make the communication policy decisions [EP]
.64	.61	.67	I report public opinion survey results to keep management informed of the opinions of various publics [CF]
.57	.61	.53	I create opportunities for management to hear the views of various internal and external publics [CF]
.57	.56	.57	I conduct communication audits to identify communication problems between the organization and various publics [CF]

Identification of Conceptual Role for Each Measure:

EP=Expert Prescriber; PF=Process Facilitator; CF=Communication Facilitator

Table 2.

Factor Loadings for Technician Role Items in 1979 and 1991 PRSA Surveys

Ave	1979	1991	Item Description
.83	.82	.83	I handle the technical aspects of producing public relations materials [TECH]
.74	.77	.70	I produce brochures, pamphlets and other publications [TECH]
.64	.72	.55	I maintain media contacts and place press releases [TECH]
.63	.67	.58	I am the person who writes public relations materials presenting information on issues important to the organization [TECH]
.63	.61	.65	I do photography and graphics for public relations materials [TECH]
.55	.50	.59	I edit and/or rewrite for grammar and spelling the materials written by others in the organization [TECH]

Identification of Conceptual Role for Each Measure:

TECH=Communication Technician

The manager role consists of seven measures of problem-solving process facilitation, four measures of communication facilitation, and three measures of expert prescription (see Table 1). The technician role consists of six measures, all of which were conceptualized by Broom (1982) as measures of communication technician role enactment (see Table 2).

Manager and technician role factor scores were generated for each respondent in the 1979 study and the 1991 study. Because the extraction strategy was orthogonal, the two role scores are wholly unrelated to each other. Enacting the manager role is not the opposite of enacting the technician role; the two role activities are wholly independent of each other ($r=0.00$; $p=.99$). In the 1979 survey, Cronbach's reliability coefficient for the 15 items in the manager role scale (Table 1) equals .94. The reliability coefficient for the six items in the technician role scale (Table 2) equals .79. In the 1991 survey, Cronbach's alpha equals .94 for the manager scale and .74 for the technician scale.

Operationally, relations between role measures and other variables can be tested in several ways. Manager and technician role scores can be tested separately against other variables. However, the concept of predominant practitioner role has proved useful in past research (Broom & Dozier, 1986). A practitioner's predominant role is the set of role activities the practitioner enacts most frequently. If the practitioner's technician role score is higher than his or her manager role score, the

practitioner is classified as a technician predominantly. Since factor scores are normalized, roughly half the sample in each survey is classified as "technicians." This means that these practitioners enact technician role activities relatively more frequently (in comparison to others in the sample) than manager role activities. The other half of the sample enacts manager role activities relatively more frequently than technician role activities; they are classified as "managers."

This strategy partially corrects for normative responses wherein respondents perhaps over-report the frequency of manager activities and under-report technician activities. Further, this strategy allows role behavior to be treated as categorical for purposes of analysis of variance.

Education

Education was measured by asking respondents the number of years of formal education (beyond high school) they had completed. This measurement strategy provides a rough proxy measure of practitioner acquisition of the knowledge necessary to enact the manager role. The IABC Excellence Study (IABC Research Foundation, 1991) provides strong evidence that such knowledge is the most powerful indicator of **excellence**, a construct that also includes manager role enactment. In future research, we suggest a more detailed measure of education, particularly of specialized training in public relations.

Public Relations Staff Size

This concept was measured with a single indicator. Respondents were asked "how many public relations practitioners work in your department/agency?" The respondent was instructed to include himself or herself in the count. The exact number of practitioners (up to 1,000) in the organization was captured.

Professional Experience

Several operational strategies can be used to measure practitioner professional experience. In the present study, the concept was operationalized as the number of years the respondent has "worked full-time in public relations." The actual number of years was captured.

Tenure

Respondents were asked "how many years have you been in your present job?" The actual number of years was captured. This measure provides an additional measure of professional experience, specific to the current organization and current duties and responsibilities.

Participation in Management Decision Making

Respondents were asked how often they participate in meetings with management to decide on adopting new policies, to discuss major problems, to adopt new programs or procedures, to implement new programs or procedures, and to discuss and evaluate the results of new programs or procedures (five items). Each

activity was measured on a five-point scale that ranged from "never" (1) to "always" (5). Cronbach's reliability coefficient for this index is .92 in both the 1979 and 1991 surveys.

Salary

Respondents were asked to indicate their annual income from their full-time public relations job. The numeric response was recorded to the nearest thousand dollars. Because of the sensitive nature of this question, the measure was labeled as "optional" in the questionnaire. In 1979, seven percent of respondents declined to answer this question. Of male practitioners, eight percent declined to answer and five percent of female practitioners declined to answer. In 1991, about 17 percent of both male and female respondents did not answer this question. As in 1979, refusal to answer the income question was unrelated to gender. Seventeen percent of males and 17 percent of females declined to provide this information.

Job Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to evaluate five statements about their current job. Using a seven-point scale, respondents indicated how strongly they liked the work they are doing, whether the job gave them a chance to do the things they do best, their feelings of accomplishment from their work, perceived importance of their work, and an evaluation of satisfaction, in comparison to other jobs. Cronbach's reliability coefficient for this index is .91 in the 1979 survey and .88 in the 1991 survey.

Findings

Figure 2 displays the 1979 findings of the test of the 15 relationships posited in the model in Figure 1. Path coefficients were computed according to the logic of the model in Figure 1. Relations between antecedent and dependent variables are computed after controlling for variance accounted for by any intervening variables. The solid lines represent statistically significant relationships that can be generalized at a 95 percent level of confidence (alpha=.05) to the population of PRSA members in 1979. The dotted lines represent relationships in the sample that cannot be generalized at a 95 percent level of confidence (alpha=.05) to the population of PRSA members in 1979.

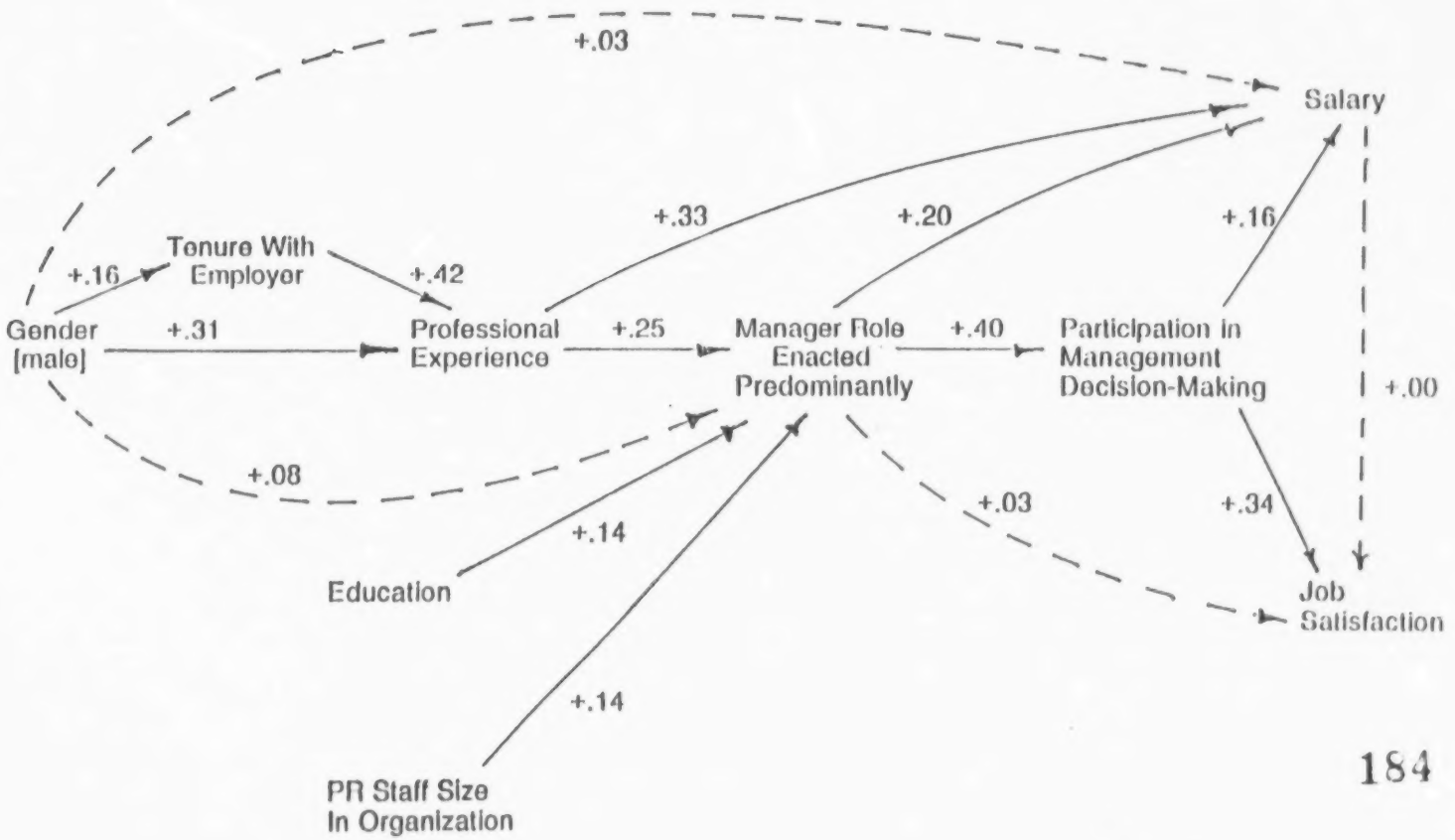
The only relationship posited in the theoretical model in Figure 1 disconfirmed by statistical test is the linkage between education (years of education beyond high school) and enactment of the manager role predominantly. The remaining 14 relationships are positive (as posited) and statistically significant.

Of special interest to the debate over gender and salary is the linkage between gender and predominant manager role enactment and the linkage between gender and salary.

The linkage between gender and predominant manager role enactment is the residual variance not accounted for by the practitioner's years of professional experience in public relations and length of employment in his or her present job. This

Figure 3.

Test of Role Enactment Model Using 1991 PRSA Membership Survey (N=203)



residual variance (if significant) is taken as an indicator of gender role segregation, although other theoretical explanations can be posited. That is, women are significantly less likely to enact the manager role predominantly, even when men and women practitioners are equalized in terms of their professional experience. In 1979, this relationship was statistically significant; gender accounted for about four percent of variance in predominant manager role enactment, even after the influence of professional experience was controlled.

The linkage between gender and salary is the residual variance not accounted for by professional experience, predominant manager role enactment, and participation in management decision making. This is gender salary discrimination, the income penalty women in public relations suffer, even after differences in professional experience, role playing, and decision-making participation have been controlled. In the 1979 study, this relationship is statistically significant; gender accounted for about six percent of the variance in income, even after professional experience, manager role playing, and decision-making participation were controlled.

Gender differences in income can be more readily appreciated by examining average annual income for men and women practitioners. In the 1979 sample, women practitioners earned an average of $22,620 a year, compared to $38,840 for men.[1] That is, women were making only 58 cents (on average) for every dollar their male counterparts made in 1979. Practitioners enacting the manager role predominantly made $41,710 in 1979, whereas practitioners enacting the technician role predominantly earned only $27,530.[2] In 1979, technicians earned only 66 cents (on average) for every dollar earned by managers (on average). In 1979, 57 percent of the men practitioners enacted the manager role predominantly, whereas only 28 percent of the women practitioners enacted the manager role predominantly.[3] Further, women practitioners in 1979 posted an average of 9.9 years of professional experience in public relations, significantly less than men practitioners, who posted an average of 16.1 years.[4]

Given the differences in professional experience and role enactment, do these factors account for income differences between men and women? No, not in 1979. After controlling for the influences of differences in professional experience, manager role enactment and participation in management decision making, women still made significantly less money than men. The average adjusted annual income for women

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[1]The relationship is statistically significant at the 99.9 percent level of confidence ($F[1/405] = 77.05$; sig. < .001).

[2]The relationship is statistically significant at the 99.9 percent level of confidence ($F[1/407] = 69.05$; sig. < .001).

[3]The relationship is statistically significant at the 99.9 percent level of confidence (Chi-Square = 29.25; d.f. = 1; sig. < .001).

[4]The relationship is statistically significant at the 99.9 percent level of confidence ($F[1/432] = 46.21$; sig. < .001).

practitioners in 1979 totaled $29,900, compared to $39,200 for men.[5] In 1979, women practitioners on average made 76 cents for every dollar earned by men on average, even after the influences on salary of professional experience, manager role playing, and management decision-making participation were removed.

Figure 3 displays the test of the same theoretical model on the data collected in 1991, using the same measures on a sample of PRSA members, comparable to the 1979 sample. Of the 15 posited relationships, four are not statistically significant. Of those, two insignificant relationships are of special importance. If replicated in further studies, the change from 1979 to 1991 represents an important evolution of public relations practices away from systemic patterns of gender discrimination in roles and salaries documented in the 1979 study.

The relationship between gender and predominant manager role enactment is not statistically significant, once the influences of professional experience and tenure are removed.[6] As in 1979, practitioners enacting the manager role predominantly in 1991 earn more than practitioners enacting the technician role. Managers in 1991 earned average annual incomes of $73,620, compared to technicians earning an average of $51,050 a year.[7] Among men practitioners in 1991, 55 percent enact the manager role predominantly, virtually unchanged from the 57 percent of men enacting the manager role predominantly in 1979. Among women practitioners in 1991, 39 percent enact the manager role predominantly, up eleven points from 28 percent in 1979.[8] Although men in the sample are more likely to enact the manager role predominantly than women in the sample, the gender gap in role enactment has shrunk since 1979. Gender accounts for less than one percent of the variance in predominant manager role enactment, once the influence of professional experience is controlled. The relationship between gender and manager role enactment in the sample cannot be generalized with confidence to the population of PRSA members in 1991.

The smaller sample size in 1991 increases the possibility of a Type II error (null hypothesis is confirmed even though it is not true in the population) in making this inference. However, the drop in explained variance from more than four percent in 1979 to less than one percent in 1991 supports the inference of an actual reduction of the gender gap in role enactment in the population of PRSA members.

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[5]The relationship was statistically significant at the 99.9 percent level of confidence (F[1/394] = 27.07; sig. < .001).

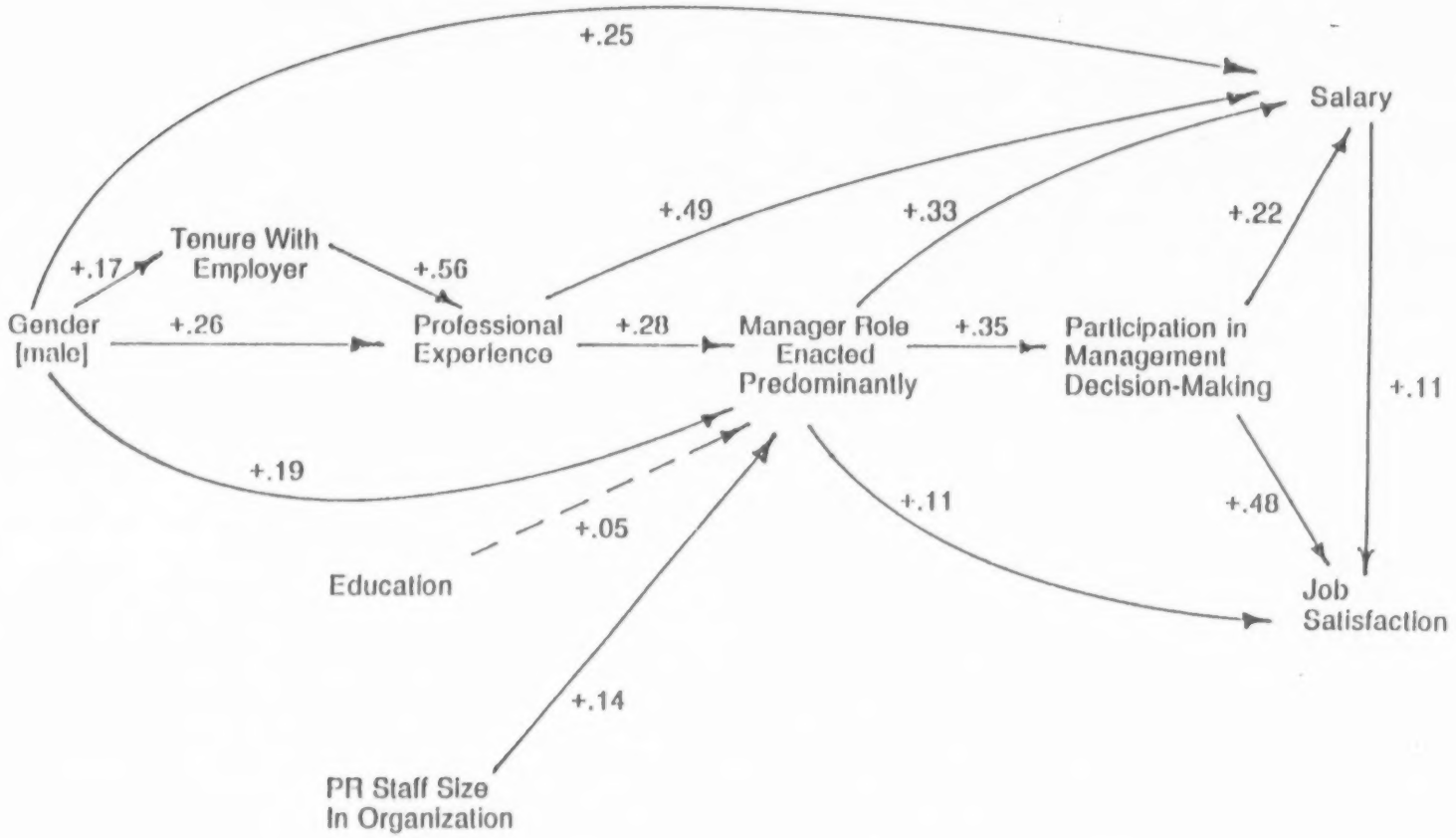
[6]The relationship is not statistically significant according to the 95 percent decision rule (alpha=.05). F[1/193] = 1.19; sig. = .276.

[7]The relationship is statistically significant at the 99 percent level of confidence (F[1/163] = 9.28; sig. <. 01).

[8]The relationship in 1991 is statistically significant at the 95 percent level of confidence (Chi-Square = 4.74; d.f. = 1; sig. < .05).

Figure 2.

Test of Role Enactment Model Using 1979 PRSA Membership Survey (N=440)



Women practitioners continue to earn lower salaries than men practitioners in 1991. On average, women practitioners earn $53,010 in 1991, whereas men practitioners earn $71,450.[9] That is, women on average make 74 cents for every dollar men make in 1991. Although the gap has narrowed since 1979 (up from 58 cents on average in 1979) the difference in income remains statistically significant.

The relationship between gender and salary is not statistically significant, however, after controlling for the influences of professional experience, manager role enactment, and decision-making participation. Women make $60,740 on average, once the influences on salaries of professional experience, manager role enactment, and decision-making participation are removed. Men on average make $63,810 a year, after these influences are removed. That is, women average 95 cents for every dollar men make (once these influences are removed), up from 76 cents in 1979. The $3,070 gap between salaries of men and women (once covariates are controlled) is not statistically significant.[10]

In 1991, differences in professional experience account for a larger portion of the gender income differences, when compared to 1979. However, based on these samples of PRSA members, aggregate differences in professional experience (years of public relations work) change slowly. In 1991, men posted 16.9 years of professional experience in public relations, virtually unchanged from the 16.1 year average posted in 1979. Women posted an average of 11.0 years in 1991, up slightly from 9.9 years average professional experience in 1979.[11]

Two other relationships posited in Figure 1 were not found in the 1991 survey. In 1991, participation in management decision making plays a predominant role in accounting for variance in job satisfaction of practitioners. Other influences posited in the model exert no significant influence on job satisfaction, once management decision-making participation is controlled. Specifically, enactment of the manager role predominantly and salary are not significantly related to practitioner job satisfaction, once the influence of decision-making participation is removed. Other factors external to the model account for the lion's share of the variance in practitioner job satisfaction in 1991. The only variable important in explaining practitioner job satisfaction in both 1979 and 1991 is practitioner participation in management decision making.

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[9]The relationship is statistically significant at the 98 percent level of confidence (F[1/169] = 6.03; sig. = .015).

[10]There is only a 31 percent chance that the difference in mean income between men and women in 1991 generalizes to the population of PRSA members, once the influence of professional experience, role enactment, and decision-making participation has been removed (F[1/158] = 0.16; sig. = .692).

[11]The differences in professional experience between men and women is statistically significant in 1979 (F[1/432] = 46.2; sig. < .001) and in 1991 (F[1/204] = 27.1; sig. < .001). Aggregate increases in years of professional experience from 1979 to 1991 are insignificant for both men (F[1/425] = 0.76; sig. = .38) and women (F[1/211] = 1.39; sig. = 24).

Conclusions

A comparative analysis of surveys conducted of PRSA members in 1979 and 1991 suggests that patterns of gender salary discrimination and gender role segregation may be breaking down in public relations work. In 1991, gender differences in manager role enactment and salary are more fully accounted for by differences in professional experience than these same differences were in 1979.

We reach this conclusion with some trepidation, because such findings and conclusions could be used to perpetuate gender discrimination in public relations. Therefore, we want to debunk two possible distortions of our findings.

> **Distortion #1:** The study supports the conclusion that gender salary discrimination and gender role segregation never existed.

Not true! The data provide strong evidence of gender salary discrimination and gender role segregation among PRSA members in 1979.

> **Distortion #2:** The study supports the conclusion that gender salary discrimination and gender role segregation may have existed in the past but have now disappeared.

Premature! The data from a smaller sample of PRSA members in 1991 show a significant decrease in the variance not accounted for by professional experience in role enactment and salary, when compared to a larger sample of PRSA members in 1979. Although the trend is encouraging, the smaller sample size in 1991 provides less precise estimates of the population parameters. We are more confident that gender salary discrimination and gender role segregation existed in 1979 than that such discrimination and segregation no longer existed in 1991. The possibility of Type I error in 1979 is remote. The possibility of Type II error in 1991 is considerably larger. The magnitudes (effect size) of gender salary discrimination and gender role segregation apparently have shrunk in the population of PRSA members since 1979. However, the population to which such inferences can be made (PRSA members) constitutes only a small faction of the overall public relations labor force.[12] Clearly, further research is needed on different sample frames to permit extrapolation of the findings of this study to the universe of public relations practitioners. We believe we have detected progress, but not the state of gender parity.

With these limitations in mind, what factors can account for the reduction in overt gender salary discrimination and gender role segregation? We believe that the

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[12]In post hoc analysis of the 1991 data base, responses of both PRSA and IABC members were combined and the model in Figure 1 tested on the combined data. Of specific relevance here is the correlation between income and gender, after controlling for professional experience, role enactment, and decision-making participation. The partial correlation coefficient is .08 between gender (male) and income, which is not statistically significant at the 95 percent level of confidence. However, there is about a 90 percent chance (p=.096) that the partial correlation in the combined sample generalizes to the population of PRSA and IABC members in 1991. We conclude that the effects of gender salary discrimination may linger for IABC members (partial correlation = .19), even after the influences of professional experience, role enactment, and decision-making participation have been removed.

feminist movement in American society accounts for some of that change. We also believe that women practitioners who have struggled to break through the managerial "glass ceiling" are seeing some fruits of their labor. These efforts within the profession have been supported by feminist scholars who have sought to demystify and de-construct mechanisms of gender discrimination. Scholars such as Cline, Creedon, Dayrit, Einsiedel, Ferguson, L. Grunig, Hon, Mathews, Piekos, Rakow, and Toth have contributed much to our understanding of roles and gender. This constitutes only a partial list of feminist scholars who have contributed to the body of knowledge in this area. Further work needs to be done. In the concluding section, we attempt to facilitate this stream of research by clarifying several issues related to role research.

Future Directions in Roles Research

In the positivist tradition, roles research seeks to explain and predict the antecedents and consequences of role enactment. At the same time, roles research is embedded in a set of normative judgments that make such positive theory useful and important. As Ferguson (1987) suggested, roles research benefits from a clear explication and clarification of the presuppositions that drive the research agenda.

A Technician By Any Name

Much ado has been made of the use of the label technician to describe the set of practitioner activities involved in the generation and dissemination of messages in behalf of organizations. Of particular concern is the implication that the technician label was assigned pejoratively to public relations work principally conducted by women. Indeed, labels that the powerful assign to the less powerful should be examined critically, for the structure of language does serve vested interests of the status quo (Spender, 1990). Such an analysis of the technician label in roles research does not support such allegations. First, the technician label was selected because it clarifies the relationship between the activities of practitioners and the larger organization. Although such activities may involve high levels of creativity and communicator competency, they remain unrelated to other important aspects of the public relations function (environmental scanning, program evaluation, issues management, strategic planning), as a matter of empirical fact. Second, the label was first explicated for purposes of organizational theory, not to describe the activities of women practitioners. Although the initial development of role measures occurred in the 1970s (Broom & Smith, 1978), the initial linkage between gender and roles was not discovered until the 1980s (Broom, 1982). The concept of gender role segregation (Dozier, Chapo & Sullivan, 1983) was developed inductively through secondary analysis of research on practitioner use of evaluation techniques (Dozier, 1981). The temporal sequence is inconsistent with assertions that the technician label was developed to denigrate women's work.

Regarding gender and roles, our presupposition is that healthy humans and competent manager are highly androgynous, possessing attributes stereotypically associated with both men and women (Bem, 1977). We view with skepticism any scholarship that traffics in gender stereotypes. If women are more emphatic, expressive, and warm as dictated by socialization and stereotype, then men would benefit from the acquisition of such competencies (Powell, 1988). If men are more

logical, self-confident, and adventurous as dictated by socialization and stereotype, then women would benefit from the acquisition of such competencies.

With regard to the segregation of women in the technician role, we take exception to the assertion that roles research trivializes and denigrates such work (Creedon, 1991, p. 69). Analogously, studying the day-to-day tasks in caring for an infant does not trivialize and denigrate parenthood. Extending this same analogy, arguing that women should have the choice to work inside or outside the home does not denigrate or trivialize motherhood. Regarding gender and practitioner roles, the issue is **career choice**, not the inherent worth of the work itself. As noted above, all practitioners enact elements of both the manager and technician roles, which themselves are simply useful abstractions for studying the wide range of activities that practitioners do in their daily work. In the 1970s and 1980s, women enacted the technician role predominantly with much greater frequency than men. In the 1990s, this study indicates that the pattern may be changing as women (in the aggregate) achieve higher levels of professional experience.[13] Do (did) women select the technician role for themselves? Or do (did) the conjoined influences of socialization, preparation, opportunities, stereotyping, and direct discrimination result in the involuntary segregation of women in a particular organizational role? The question of choice, however, is fundamental. Anecdotal data indicating some women practitioners prefer performing activities that make up the technician role in no way satisfies the choice question. Clearly, more research is needed.

We further believe that the debate over the technician label has little to do with feminism. The debate has much more to do with the seeming conflict between the "creative artistic" preferences of many practitioners, both male and female, and the managerial function of public relations. McGoon (1993) provides relevant anecdotal information from a fax poll conducted by Communication World. A majority of those polled said they preferred writing, editing, producing publications, and other message-generating activities. Managing activities in the public relations or communication were preferred by only 18 of the 170 respondents. Only four of the 170 indicated that "working with top management" was their top preferred work activity. When asked where they wanted to be professionally in ten years, some of the more telling answers included: "writer collecting royalties on a runaway best seller children's book," "living in Italy writing books," "on a beach," "owning my own greenhouse," and "in France working as an English professor."

Unfortunately, little formal research has been conducted on the subjective wants and dreams of today's working practitioners. One exception is the Q-study by Dozier and Gottesman (1982) of practitioners in San Diego, California. The Q-study, which involved Q-sorts of self-referent statements about publics relations, was embedded in a larger survey of San Diego IABC and PRSA members by mailed

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[13]In 1991, enactment of the manager role (role scores) among both PRSA and IABC members differed little between men and women. Among PRSA members in 1991, the partial correlation between manager role enactment (not predominant role) and male gender is .01 (p=.42), once professional experience is controlled. Among IABC members in 1991, the partial correlation between manager role enactment (not predominant role) and male gender is .03 (p=.38), once professional experience is controlled. Neither relationship is significant. Technical role enactment is higher for women than for men in both the PRSA (partial r = .06; sig. = .21) and IABC (partial r = .05; sig. = .31) samples in 1991. Again, neither relationship is significant.

questicnnaire. The researchers found that one belief system was highly correlated with technician role enactment. Labeled the "creative artistic" practitioner factor (Dozier & Gottesman, 1982), the men and women who loaded most heavily on this factor exhibited a series of interrelated values and beliefs about public relations work:

> The creative artistic practitioner prefers the spontaneous, intuitive, and creative aspects of the public relations process. This preference is manifest in organizational role playing that stresses production of communication and immersion in the techniques of communication development. While creative artistic practitioners in this study described themselves as holding middle and top management positions in their organizations -- as well as staff positions -- they appear to avoid the activities associated with the managerial role. The creative artistic practitioner wants more say in organizational decisions, but is distrustful of changes implied by climbing the organizational ladder to decision-making levels. (p. 26)

Public relations practitioners who gravitate toward communication production activities, who define creativity largely in terms of the words and graphics they produce, find themselves at odds with the evolution of public relations into a true managerial-level profession. The label **technician**, which demystifies the organizational role of such service providers, no doubt rankles many. However, we see no value in cloaking organizational roles in labels that perpetuate myths about message-generating activities in organizations. A technician by any other name would still be a technician: a creator and disseminator of messages--intimately involved in production--operating independent of management decision making, strategic planning, issues management, environmental scanning, and program evaluation. Such work provides satisfaction to practitioners and has value to organizations, but only in the context of a managed public relations function.

The Empirical and Normative Value of Technician Role Enactment

Regarding the "value" of technician role enactment, it is a safe empirical generalization (but not a normative evaluation) to assert that organizations reward manager role enactment with higher salaries than they do technician role enactment (see notes 2 and 7). Women and men enacting the manager role predominantly earn higher salaries than men and women enacting the technician role predominantly. Participation in strategic decision making (as opposed to making tactical decisions about creating and disseminating messages) is unrelated to technician role enactment. Environmental scanning and program evaluation are also unrelated to technician role enactment. These empirical findings should not be confused with normative assertions about practitioner roles.

Theory-driven normative assessments of the value of roles operate at the **organizational** level of analysis. The organizational worth of the manager role is embedded in a definition of the public relations function in which organizations negotiate and adapt to their environments, based on a two-way exchange of communication between dominant coalitions and publics (Dozier, 1989). For the public relations unit to perform this function, some practitioners must have the knowledge, status and track record to enact the manager role much of the time. Organizations reward manager role enactment, but such reward is an effect of the

role's value to the organization, not its cause. The normative value of manager role enactment, therefore, derives from the public relations unit's ability to solve problems for organizations.

The generation of mediated messages for one's organization has no inherent value in public relations. Writing and disseminating messages are important activities in public relations and in other organizational functions, but not ends in themselves. This distinction is extremely difficult for a "communication specialist" or a "journalist in residence" to grasp, in part because it's different from worldviews formed through media production work and in part because it threatens perceptions of self worth. Environmental scanning, strategic planning, issues management, and program evaluation have no equivalencies in the kind of work journalists in residence and other message producers do prior to switching to public relations. Nor is such knowledge easily acquired through work in message production alone. Whereas technicians make many tactical decisions in producing and distributing public relations communications, they do so more or less independent of the strategic decision making of the dominant coalition.

In the end, the organizational worth of mediated messages is not indicated by the gold quills and silver anvils practitioners give to each other. The value of communications (as distinct from communication) is determined by the quality of mutually beneficial **relationships** that such communications help to establish with key publics. By inference, the value of technician role enactment is nested within the public relations management function.

When a practitioner enacts the technician role predominantly and continues to do so throughout his or her career, the value or worth of such activities cannot be determined without knowing the context. We can assume that, in most situations, technically competent communications are prerequisite to desired impact. However, well-crafted communications are by no means sufficient. To be sufficient, communications must be executed within the context of a strategic plan to achieve measurable goals and objectives related to establishing or maintaining desired relationships. Only then can the value of communications be determined, based on their contributions to goal achievement (Dozier & Ehling, 1992).

What, Then, Is Public Relations?

Normative presuppositions regarding role enactment do not stop at the organizational level of analysis. The emergence of public relations as a true profession rests on benefits that professional practices provide society as a whole. The twin concepts of action strategies (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985) and symmetry (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) provide significant benefits to society when incorporated into public relations practices. Cutlip, Center and Broom (1985) define **action strategies** as "steps taken to change the organization's policies, procedures, products, services and behavior to better serve the mutual interests of the organization and its publics" (p. 258). As defined by Grunig and Hunt (1984), **symmetrical** public relations treats the function as dialogue, both in terms of communication and in terms of effect. Dozier (1993) argues that symmetrical practices require seemingly paradoxical behavior of practitioners.

> In communication with internal and external publics, the practitioner acts as agent of the organization's dominant coalition, as a cooperative antagonist in relations with publics. In communication with other members of the dominant coalition, however, the practitioner advocates the publics' interests, acting both symbolically and pragmatically as *their* agent (p. 235).

Action strategies are program-level manifestations of a symmetrical worldview, wherein practitioners seek "positive sum" or "win-win" solutions to problems involving organizations and their publics.

Symmetrical action strategies presume that practitioners participate in management decision making as expert prescribers, as communication facilitators and as problem-solving process facilitators. Without formal or informal power to influence management decision making, to implement action strategies, the management function of public relations cannot be performed. Instead, this important management function is reduced to the essentially technical task of producing communications to implement decisions made by others in the organization. The resulting vacuum in the management function of public relations is likely to be taken over by other units in organizations (Lauzen, 1990, 1991). As a consequence, individual practitioners, the public relations unit, the organization, the emerging public relations profession, and society as a whole suffer.

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Self-Actualization as Mediator Between Intent and Behavior in Public Relations Campaigns

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Running head: SELF-ACTUALIZATION, INTENT AND BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

This research posits that individuals with a tendency to renege on stated intentions to perform a pro-social behavior can be identified in advance through a psychometric measure of self-actualization. Self-actualization mediates the intent-behavior relationship as demonstrated by a significant positive correlation becoming statistically insignificant when self-actualization is controlled. This study provides evidence that measures of self-actualization should be included in program evaluation questionnaires.

Self-Actualization as Mediator Between Intent and Behavior in Public Relations Campaigns

Like the weather, researchers talk about attitude-intention-behavior relationships, but accept them as being only imperfectly predictable. Inadequacies in models and methodologies are recognized as affecting correlation strength, but the mediating effects of individual personality traits have not received an equivalent degree of attention in public relations research. To those familiar with the history of marketing research, using personality traits to predict behavior may sound like a return to a failed marketing research approach.

Because many of the findings during the 1960s and 70s were highly equivocal, research in the area of personality traits and buying behavior essentially ceased by the mid-70s (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1988). But interest in personality trait research has recently renewed due to better results based on "more specific measures of more precisely defined personality traits and types which are theoretically relevant to economic behavior" (Foxall and Goldsmith, p. 116). It is time for public relations researchers to explore the area of personality traits as they mediate behavior and apply it to the discipline's own unique research needs.

Behavioral prediction models currently used by public relations researchers, such as Fishbein's (1967; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) theory of reasoned action or Grunig's (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) situational publics, do not address how to identify which members of a target public will fail to act on stated intent. These models operate under the tenet that behavioral outcomes can be predicted with a high degree of accuracy if all model components are rigorously measured.

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This research puts forward the proposition that there will always be a gap between reported intended behavior and actual behavior due to individual personality traits. A central research question is: How large is the gap between what people report they intend to do and what they actually do with regard to target behavior? A related and perhaps more useful research question is: What traits of individuals predict consistency of reported intended behavior and actual behavioral follow-through?

To answer the second question, psychometric concepts from needs theory were used to predict who will do as they say in terms of target behavior (True Positives) and who will renege on reported intent (False Positives). The present study initiates a stream of research seeking a theory-driven and relatively unobtrusive measure for predicting the percentage of true successes (actual target behavior change) relative to the larger set of respondents reporting intent to perform a desired behavior.

Information Campaigns

Kotler (1972) defines a social problem as "a condition or group of conditions in society which is viewed apprehensively or distastefully by some of its members and which is thought to be susceptible to mitigation or elimination through collective action" (p. 174). Resultant activity to address the social problem is termed social action.

Advancing social action through marketing techniques has been studied extensively (Bloom & Novelli, 1981; Fox & Kotler, 1980; Kotler, 1972; and Kotler & Zaltman, 1971). Applying marketing techniques to social action is usually dated as beginning with a famous question posed by G. D. Wiebe (1951-1952):

"Why can't you sell brotherhood and rational thinking like you sell soap?" (p. 679). Public relations professionals and social marketers, however, found "selling" social action a more difficult process than selling a "new and improved" detergent (Bloom & Novelli, 1981; and Fox & Kotler, 1980).

The social causes that information campaigns promote frequently involve private, sensitive or frightening issues that many people do not want to think about, or are unwilling to relate to their own behavior. As Kotler and Zaltman (1971) describe it: "Social marketing typically has to deal with the market's core beliefs and values whereas business marketing often deals with superficial preferences and opinions" (p. 11). Regardless of the issue, "the task of social marketing is to move people from intention to action" (Fox and Kotler, 1980, p. 27).

Unfortunately, many social action campaigns lack adequate research to achieve this goal (Bloom & Novelli, 1981; Fox & Kotler, 1980; and Kaufman, 1972). Atkins and Freimuth (1989) highlight this problem in the area of public health campaigns which mostly "are under-developed at the preparation, production, and dissemination phases of implementation due to poor conceptualization and inadequate formative evaluation research inputs" (p. 131). The campaign planner is faced with the situation of needing reliable research to develop and evaluate social action programs, but having only limited success with current tools.

Self-Reports of Behavior

How can a public relations practitioner tell if the message has been effective? Practitioners may have few objective measures of message acceptance and behavior change. If an immediate indicator of effectiveness is needed, the practitioner frequently resorts to asking members of the target public for self-reports of intended

or actual behavior. But, Bloom and Novelli (1981) argue convincingly that the results of survey research on sensitive issues may be misleading: "While people are generally willing to be interviewed . . . they are more likely to give inaccurate, self-serving, or socially desirable answers to (sensitive-issue) questions than to questions about cake mixes, soft drinks, or cereals" (p. 80). Additionally, the success of information campaigns may make it very difficult to accumulate key data. Change targets' views of normative behavior may be so influenced by the campaign itself that they are unwilling to reveal deviant behavior or may become self-deceptive as to their intended or actual behavior.

Reliance on reports of intent can be problematic if the information collected leads to inflated estimates of campaign effectiveness. For example, Rathje (1984) discusses problems in quantifying drinking in a household when survey respondents "normally under-report alcohol consumption by from 40% to 80%," as compared to the physical evidence of "empties" generated by the household (p. 25).

Survey instruments may inadvertently measure attitudes toward behavior rather than the actual behavior itself. McGuire (1984) states that surveys do their job so well "that it is hard to obtain useful information on actual behaviors that are uncolored by informants' attitudes, ideas, and beliefs" (p. 112). The answers will tend to reflect the attitudes of the respondent about the behavior rather than actual behaviors themselves (Belch, 1979). Manfredo and Shelby (1988) found that: "Self-report is at the interface between actual past behavior and attitudes. Like behavioral intention, it is a belief about one's behavior and, to an extent, appears to reflect how people perceive themselves and their actions" (p. 741).

Where does this leave campaign planners and researchers in their quest for reliable data? If self-reports are unreliable and direct observation of behavior is frequently impossible, should social marketers give up trying to quantify the effectiveness of information campaigns? Psychometric measures utilizing concepts from needs theory, specifically self-actualization, may obviate the problem. The underlying logic of self-actualization is that the person has a firm sense of self and reality, which would deter the formation of self-deceptions.

Self-Actualization

Abraham Maslow (1954) theorized a five-tiered hierarchy of needs common to all people: physiological, safety security, social, esteem and self-actualization. Self-actualization is the culmination of fulfilling the lower needs and reaching to discover the true self. While Maslow's full hierarchy may not be universally accepted, there is support for the concept of self-actualization as a higher-level need (Graham & Balloun, 1973; Mathes, 1981; Mathes & Edwards, 1978; Wahba & Bridwell, 1976).

Maslow (1967) operationalized self-actualizing people as follows: "They listen to their own voices; they take responsibility; they are honest; and they work hard. They find out who they are and what they are" (p. 285). Additionally, Frick (1982) describes self-actualized people as having "some sense of inner direction and control, a philosophical posture supporting freedom of choice, and a commitment to some concept of self-determination and personal responsibility" (p. 46). Self-actualization rejects the idea of humans as puppets manipulated by forces beyond their control; instead there is a deep sense of autonomy.

Self-actualization may be acceptable at the theoretical level, but is its existence stable enough to be considered a personality trait and does that imply an ability to affect behavior? Traits are defined by Epstein (1979) as a "generalized tendency for a person to behave in a certain manner over a sufficient sample of events and does not imply that he or she will exhibit trait-relevant behavior in all situations or even on all occasions in the same situation" (p. 1102).

When Epstein (1979) compared four separate studies of everyday behavior, he found that traits have cross-situational stability, if more than a single instance of behavior is taken as a measure of trait existence: "It was demonstrated that there is enough cross-situational stability in everyday life so that useful statements about individual behavior can be made without having to specify the eliciting situations" (p.1122). According to Epstein's research, the deficiency of traits as predictors of behavior may result from insufficient measurement (too few behaviors being recorded) rather than inherent deficiencies of traits as predictors of behavior.

We can infer from the discussion that self-actualization is a cross-situational trait and its presence gives individuals a greater ability to relate in prosocial ways to society. A highly self-actualized person is free of "neurotic self-concern" and is therefore better able to form intentions related to behaviors that benefit others. Alternately, low self-actualizers would be more influenced by normative considerations (due to their lack of self-awareness), and therefore more prone to provide survey information perceived as socially correct. Measuring the level of self-actualization would provide a way to identify False Positives, those individuals who either can not or will not accurately report intended behavior.

Research Setting

The research setting was the City of San Diego's Curbside Recycling Program for recycling household trash. This research context is apropos to the broader discussion of social action programs because the city's program is voluntary and offers no tangible or immediate rewards for participants while requiring some effort on the individual's part. Therefore, participation in the program must rely on factors other than legal compulsion or financial reward. In this regard, participation can be viewed as cross-contextual with many other social action causes.

When it comes to social action issues, attitudes reported do not necessarily translate into action. Research conducted by The Gallup Report (1989) found that 76 percent of Americans labeled themselves as "environmentalists." But according to a study of environmentalism by the advertising firm of Saatchi & Saatchi, "behavior has not caught up with attitude . . . 16% or less of consumers act on their concerns in terms of real behavior" (Goldman, 1991, p. 12).

Various predictors have been used to estimate the likelihood of participation in recycling programs, but results are mixed (Mahai & Twight, 1971; McGuire, 1984; Rathje, 1989; and Vining & Ebreo, 1990). Conventional wisdom suggests that demographics, especially education and income, are the best predictors of recycling participation. In the 1970s and 1980s, environmentalists were assumed to be almost exclusively well-educated, white, and upper-middle class. Now, according to Garcia (1991), environmentalism "defies standard demographics" (p. 1). But this conclusion is based almost exclusively on self-reports of behavior. When actual behavior (using direct observation) is used, these factors are no longer effective predictors.

With perhaps a touch of cynicism, Rathje (1989) has found a rather consistent relationship between a person's estimate of the neighbor's likelihood of recycling and the person's own behavior: "By comparing interview data with actual trash. . . . the most accurate description of the behavior of any household lies in that household's description of the behavior of a neighboring household" (p. 106). As an alternative to checking trash cans or asking for estimates of the neighbors' behavior, the psychometric dimension of self-actualization was used to segment recyclers from non-recyclers within the set of those reporting recycling intent.

Model and Typology

The model tested in this research is designed to utilize psychological measurements operationalizing Maslow's (1954) concept of self-actualization as a predictor of actual behavior. In addition, the model predicts that self-actualization mediates the relation between intent and actual behavior (see Figure 1). Logic suggests that social action issues, which are not physiologically or safety oriented, would be more likely viewed as a worthwhile behavior if the individual is a high self-actualizer.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Behavioral intent is measured by the change target's report of intention to participate in the social cause. Behavior is the physical manifestation of beliefs, attitudes and behavioral intent, the thing that can be visually measured. The specific behavior measured is the action promoted by the information campaign.

The possible outcomes from the expression of Intent and subsequent Observed Behavior can be explicated through a 2 X 2 topology (see Figure 2). Change targets indicate an intention to either perform or not perform a behavior. Observed Behavior verifies whether the intended behavior was or was not performed.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Methodology

The findings of this research are based on data from telephone interviews conducted by San Diego State University journalism students enrolled in a required upper-division research methodology class. The timing of the telephone interviews was planned to establish baseline measures of knowledge, attitudes, current recycling behavior and intended recycling behavior prior to the introduction of the educational outreach portion of the recycling program.

Three hundred nine telephone interviews were conducted during the period of October 30 to November 6, 1990. Telephone numbers were obtained within the designated boundaries through a reverse phone directory. Although the possibility exists that biases have been introduced into the sample selection process by not using random digit dialing, the necessity of remaining within a very restricted geographic area precluded that technique. Individual telephone numbers were selected using a random skip interval among all numbers available.

Total population in the three communities was 3,448 single family residences. The total number of telephone numbers attempted was 1,122, with a valid sample

of 542 and a response rate of 55 percent. The subjects were adult customers of Refuse Collection Division. Only those individuals who were directly involved in organizing and disposing of household trash, and who would be responsible for recycling, were surveyed.

Some of the original subjects were removed from the study when the boundaries defining curbside recycling areas shifted, and those subjects were no longer scheduled to receive the recycling service. A second elimination criterion was applied to remove those homes without a visible street address or whose trash was normally mingled with a neighbor's. The final total used for statistical tests was 179 cases (n=179).

Unobtrusive observation techniques were used by the researcher to visually confirm recycling behavior. Residents had been instructed by the city to place materials for recycling next to the trash, in a three bin system provided by the city. If any one of the bins was used during the four-week observation period, the subject was classified as a recycler.

The self-actualization measures used were taken from research conducted by Brooker (1975, 1976, 1978) to identify self-actualizing consumers. In Brooker's research, 20 dichotomous variables were presented in an A vs. B style to measure 14 different characteristics of self-actualization. Because of the time constraints imposed by telephone interviews, a determination was made to keep only the measurement pair with a corrected item-total correlation significance at the .01 level, reducing the scale to 14 items.

However, Cronbach's alpha in this study was .3206 for the 14 item scale, which was considered an unacceptable reliability level. When the index was

reduced to a six-item scale. the alpha value increased to .4122. The six-item scale was used for all analyses.

The Recycling Participation measure was an unobtrusive observation of bin usage during a four week observation period which resulted in a dichotomous variable (recycled or did not recycle). Recycling Intent was determined by asking the subjects: "If your neighborhood was included in the Curbside Recycling program. and you received a set of recycling bins. would you use them?"

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for all statistical computations. Significance was determined according to the 95 percent decision rule. and the actual significance level has been provided for each statistical test.

Hypotheses

Using Recycling Intent and Recycling Participation. dummy variables were created for each cell of the previously discussed typology. True Positives stated an intention to participate and used the bins at least once during the observation period. False Negatives stated a negative intention to participate. but used the recycling bins anyway at least once during the observation period. False Positives stated an intention to participate. but failed to use the recycling bins. True Negatives stated a negative intention to participate and did not use the recycling bins during the observation period. The resulting hypotheses were:

H_1 Recycling Intent is positively correlated with Recycling Participation.

H_2 The Self-Actualization Scale is positively correlated with Recycling Intent.

H_3 The Self-Actualization Scale is positively correlated with Recycling Participation.

H_4 The magnitude of the correlation between Recycling Intent and Recycling

Participation is reduced when the Self-Actualization Scale is controlled.

H_5 Self-Actualization Scale scores are positively correlated with respondents categorized as True Positives.

H_6 Self-Actualization Scale scores are negatively correlated with respondents categorized as False Negatives.

H_7 Self-Actualization Scale scores are negatively correlated with respondents categorized as False Positives.

H_8 Self-Actualization Scale scores are positively correlated with respondents categorized as True Negatives.

Findings

The average survey respondent was a 52-year-old female (58.6 percent) who had at least some education beyond the high school level (82.6 percent), with an average household income of $55,321 a year. There were slightly more than two people per household (2.33) and 87.1 percent of the respondents reported recycling prior to the introduction of the curbside service.

Among the subsample that stated an intention to use the recycling bins, but failed to recycle during the observation period, 90.0 percent reported recycling prior to the start of the curbside program. This may be a normative response. Participation in the city's curbside program is far easier than taking recyclables to a central location. Additionally, the program takes recyclables that most households generate, but private recycling companies generally refuse (mixed paper and tin cans). This makes self-reports of previous recycling behavior suspect, since the reported behavior would have been much more demanding to perform, and with

greater restrictions, than using the city's recycling bins. Indeed, such over-reporting of desired behavior is among the more interesting findings of the present study.

Tests of Hypotheses

Overall results of this research demonstrated that self-actualization mediates the intent-behavior relationship. Further, the Self-Actualization Scale provides a factor that can be used to correct the estimates of aggregate behavior. Pearson Correlation Coefficients were determined for both the relationships between the variables in the model and the components of the typology (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

Test of the Model

The four hypotheses related to the components of the model were supported. Hypothesis H_1 was supported with a weak positive relationship (r=.12, p=.051) between Recycling Intent and Recycling Participation. When Pearson r is squared, yielding an estimate of behavioral variance explained by intent, less than 2 percent of the variance in behavior is explained by Recycling Intent. Hypothesis H_2 was supported with a weak positive relationship (r=.18, p=.020) between the Self-Actualization Scale and Recycling Intent. Hypothesis H_3 was supported with a weak positive relationship (r=.16, p=.033) between the Self-Actualization Scale and Recycling Participation. Hypothesis H_4 was supported. The hypothesis predicted that the significant relation between Recycling Intent and Recycling Participation would become insignificant once the influence of the Self-

Actualization Scale was controlled. The intent-behavior correlation became a statistically insignificant positive relationship (r=.03, p=.371) when the correlation between Recycling Intent and Recycling Participation was controlled with the Self-Actualization Scale.

Self-Actualization and the Behavior-Intent Typology

Hypotheses related to the typology were generally supported. Hypothesis H_5 was supported with a weak positive relationship (r=.23, p=.005) between the Self-Actualization Scale and True Positives. Hypothesis H_6 was supported with a weak negative relationship (r= -.14, p=.057) between the Self-Actualization Scale and False Negatives. Hypothesis H_7 was supported with a weak negative relationship (r= -.13, p=.078) between the Self-Actualization Scale and False Positives. Hypothesis H_8 was not supported. A positive relationship was hypothesized to exist between the Self-Actualization Scale and True Negatives, but the correlation observed was a weak negative relationship (r = -.11, p=.100).

Seven of the eight hypothesized relationships were confirmed by tests of correlation coefficients. The amount of variance accounted for by self-actualization was small, due in part to the low reliability of the Self-Actualization Scale. These issues are considered in detail in the discussion section.

Discussion

The four hypotheses describing the relationships between the components of the model (Intent, Self-Actualization and Behavior) were supported by weak positive correlations, as were three of the four hypotheses related to the intent-behavior typology. Two factors may account for the lack of support for hypothesis H_8:

sample size and the nature of self-actualization. The subsample of True Negatives was very small (n=4). It is possible that the individuals in this subsample are not representative of the population of True Negatives and a larger sample may provide significantly different results.

A more important issue related to the lack of support for hypothesis H8 is the possibility that at least two components of self-actualization may be in conflict with each other when the individual is confronted with a social action situation. As described by Brooker (1975), Maslow identified 16 character traits of self-actualizers:

> Efficient perceptions of reality and comfortable relations with it; acceptance of self, others and nature; spontaneity, simplicity, naturalness; problem-centering; detached, need for privacy; autonomy; freshness of appreciation; feeling for mankind; interpersonal relations; democratic; discrimination between means and ends; philosophical, unhostile sense of humor; creativeness; resistance to enculturation; resolution of dichotomies; and peak experience. (p. 565)

Feeling for mankind (described as "genuine desire to help the human race") and autonomy (described as being "relatively independent of physical and social environment") may be in conflict when an individual is asked to perform a prosocial behavior which challenges feelings of independence (p. 565). Autonomy may be the stronger component, at least in this small sample, which would cause it to dominate the other components and result in an overall negative relationship to the behavior. Further research is needed to examine those individuals who state their unwillingness to perform prosocial behavior and remain firm in their resolve.

Post Hoc Analysis

Because the categorizing of individuals into subgroups is a central concern of this research, a post hoc analysis was conducted using discriminant analysis to determine if assignment to the subgroups of True Positives and False Positives was improved through the use of a self-actualization scale. Approximately 19 percent of the respondents who stated an intention to recycle (n = 116) failed to perform the behavior. Given that one in five of the positive intenders reneged, assigning positive intenders at random to the renege category would result in correct assignment less than 20 percent of the time. Using the Self-Actualization Scale as a discriminant function increased correct identification to 50 percent of the renegers (sig=.082). This is an important finding, particularly since the relationship between Recycling Intent and Recycling Participation is statistically insignificant after the shared variance with the Self-Actualization Scale is controlled. This finding clearly indicates that personality traits have a direct affect on the intent-behavior relationship.

Relevant Theory

What theoretical sense can be made of these findings? Since the self-actualization trait is arguably antecedent to both behavioral intent and actual behavior, both the intent to engage in pro-social target behavior and the subsequent enactment of target behavior can be viewed as consequences of the self-actualization trait. Indeed, a statement of intent to engage in target behavior is nothing but a normative response if it is not driven by an individual's self-actualization. The implications for campaign evaluation are profound. Reports of intent to engage in target behavior are essentially useless as measures of program impact when the goal

is behavior change. They are better regarded as measures of attitude formation and change about target behavior, rather than proxy measures of target behavior.

Two factors may heavily influence the problem of collecting accurate data for public relations research: normative pressures on individuals to give socially correct responses and the very human capacity to form self-deceptive cognitions.

Giving normative responses may indicate that the person feels a need to conform to societal expectations (enculturation), or there is a perceived lack of freedom of action (autonomy). Reduced feelings of autonomy and an inability to resist enculturation are two indicators of low self-actualization. Therefore, if an individual is a low self-actualizer (especially in these two components), her response to a behavioral intention question should be viewed cautiously, particularly if the respondent could interpret the question as requiring a normative response.

Individuals who delude themselves as to their behavioral fulfillment of the requested change could be said to lack acceptance of self (defined as concern over discrepancies between actual self and ideal self), or lack efficient perceptions of reality. The strength of self acceptance and perceived reality are two indicators of an individual's degree of self-actualization.

Self-deception about the actual self can prove deadly as discussed in a recent Rand Corporation study ("Some Bisexual," 1992) on sexual behavior and AIDS: "Of the men who did have bisexual experiences during adulthood, only 29 percent considered themselves bisexual, while 68 percent thought of themselves as heterosexual" (p. A-16). This may illustrate one reason why AIDS education messages directed to gay and bisexual men may be less effective than change

agencies had anticipated. The Rand research illustrated that self-delusion influences individuals to ignore public information material addressing their special needs, resulting in an ineffective social action campaign for the change agency and the risk of illness and death for the individual.

Further Research

Social marketers need a measure of self-actualization that is more applicable to the social action context. To accomplish this, researchers should return to Maslow's concept of self-actualization and use qualitative research techniques to develop cross-situational descriptors of the components of the concept. This, in turn, provides the basis for developing questions to assess levels of self-actualization to be tested quantitatively in various social action contexts. The final measures must be carefully designed to avoid obvious "correct" answers, or the problem of normative responses will not be obviated. Additionally, the measures should be context neutral to prevent limited applicability to diverse social action programs.

Observing the measures in multiple settings, an evaluation can be made as to whether specially created social action measures of self-actualization can be designed to be cross-situational. At the same time, a determination can be made as to the measure's predictive capabilities in situations where behavior can be observed. The end goal is to develop a self-actualization compensation factor that can be used in settings where follow-through can not be directly observed or verified.

In summary, the research question asked at the beginning of this work: "What traits of individuals predict consistency of reported intended behavior and actual

behavioral follow-through?" can now be answered. Self-actualization is an important key to understanding the gap between intent and behavior.

Figure 1. Prosocial Behavior Prediction Model

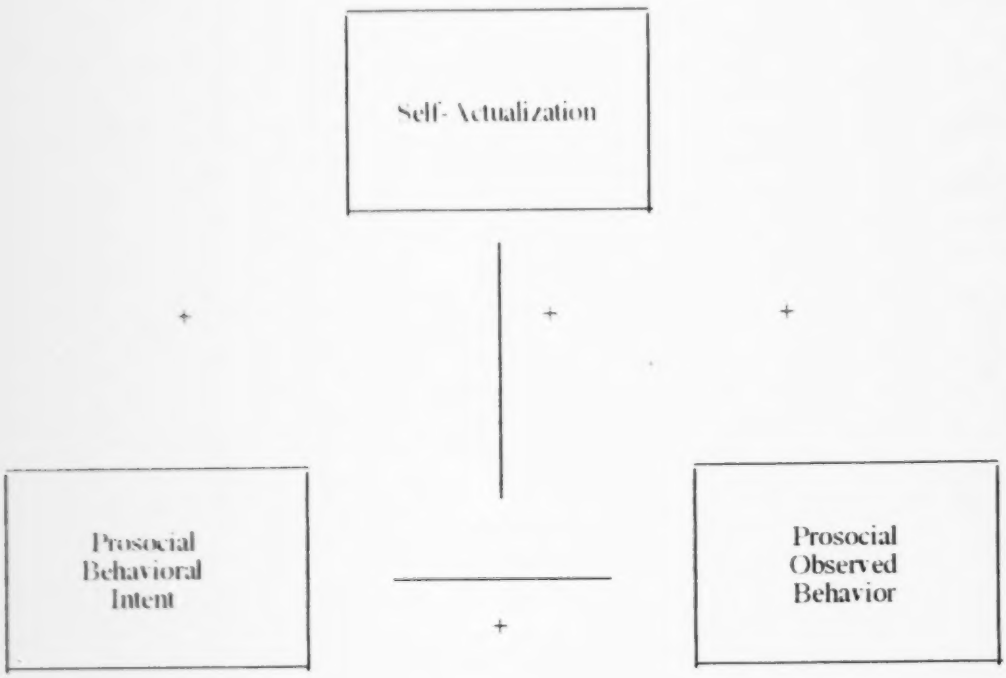

Figure 2. Intent-Observed Behavior Typology

Observed Behavior	Behavioral Intent: No	Behavioral Intent: Yes
No	True Negatives	False Positives
Yes	False Negatives	True Positives

Table 1

Results of Hypotheses Test Using Correlation Coefficients

	Self-Actualization Scale	Recycling Participation
Recycling Intent	r = .18 p = .029	r = .12 p = .051
Recycling Participation	r = .16 p = .033	
Recyclers (True Positives)	r = .23 p = .005	
Bucklers (False Negatives)	r = -.14 p = .057	
Renegers (False Positives)	r = -.13 p = .078	
Independents (True Negatives)	r = -.12 p = .100	

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